

THE MODERN CHURCHMAN

By identifying the new learning with heresy, you make orthodoxy synonymous with ignorance.—*Erasmus*.

A State without the means of change is without the means of its conservation.—*Edmund Burke*.

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THE FIFTEENTH CONFERENCE OF MODERN CHURCHMEN

CHRISTIANITY AND HISTORY

By THE EDITOR.

THE Fifteenth Conference of Modern Churchmen was held at Girton College, Cambridge, 17th—24th September, 1928. The subject of the Conference was *Christianity and History*. The Presidential Address by the Dean of St. Paul's dealt with *The Christian Interpretation of the Historical Process*. The titles and authors of the papers (all of which are published in this number) were as follows :—

- (1) *Is a Science of History possible?*
DR. G. G. COULTON, Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge.
- (2) *Is a Philosophy of History possible?*
PROFESSOR A. S. PRINGLE PATTISON, LL.D., D.C.L., F.B.A.
- (3) *The Significance of the Historical Element for Religion.*
PROFESSOR C. C. J. WEBB.
- (4) *The Importance of the Historical Element in Christianity.*
(a) PROFESSOR F. C. BURKITT, D.D., F.B.A.
- (5) (b) M. J. OAKESHOTT, M.A., Fellow of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge.
- (6) *The Significance of the Historical Element in the Christian Idea of Incarnation.*
REV. J. S. BOYS-SMITH, M.A., Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge.
- (7) *The Jewish Contribution to Christianity.*
REV. GEOFFREY ALLEN, M.A., Chaplain of Ripon Hall, Oxford.
- (8) *The Hellenic Contribution to Christianity.*
REV. CANON TOLLINTON, D.D.
- (9) *The Roman Contribution to Christianity.*
REV. ALFRED FAWKES, M.A.
- (10) *Christianity as World-renouncing.*
REV. A. C. BOUQUET, D.D.
- (11) *Christianity as World-accepting.*
REV. NORMAN SYKES, M.A., D.Phil.

(12) *Christianity as World-redeeming.*

PROFESSOR J. F. BETHUNE-BAKER, D.D., F.B.A.

(13) *The Authority of Jesus Christ.*

REV. J. S. BEZZANT, M.A., Vice-Principal of Ripon Hall.

(14) *The Finality of Christianity.*

REV. J. C. HARDWICK, M.A., B.Sc.

The following explanation sets forth the scheme of the papers and the particular aspects of the subject which it was desired they should treat :—

The purpose of this Conference is to study the Christian Religion in its relation to History. Christianity, it is said, is a historical religion : in what sense is this true, and what does it imply? Before these questions can be answered certain preliminary questions must be dealt with :

(i) What are the aims and the canons of historical enquiry? Is its aim descriptive, didactic, or genetic? Can we, by its means, be furnished with assured results? Is, in fact, a Science of History possible? By some it is contended that modern historical method makes this possible. The first paper, after the Presidential Address, will deal with this problem.

(ii) The second paper will deal with the relation of Philosophical to Historical enquiry. Can there be a philosophical interpretation of the historical process? Is, in fact, a Philosophy of History possible?

(iii) The third paper will deal with the Historical Element in various types of religion : *e.g.* it might be contended that in the animistic religions there is no historical element, these religions being apotheoses of aspects of Nature. Again, that the ancient state religions are apotheoses of political and social ideals, and that the historical element enters into them in that form. In the founded religions history enters as the biography of the founder and the history of the primitive society; and an important aspect of these religions is that they are apotheoses of personality. Once more, mystical and philosophical religions might be held to be independent of any historical element.

These three papers having considered (a) the aims of historical enquiry and the kind of results which it aims at or can expect, (b) the significance, philosophically regarded, of the historical process, (c) the place of the historical element in different types of religion; the next three papers will deal with Christianity in particular :

(iv) and (v) The fourth and fifth papers will discuss the place of the Historical Element in Christianity and its general significance. These two papers will be written from different standpoints, dependent on whether the historical order be regarded as supremely significant or as without fundamental significance. (Professor Lloyd-Morgan's *Emergent Evolution* (pp. 51 f.) might represent the latter.)

(vi) The sixth will discuss the place of the Historical Element in the Christian Idea of Incarnation.

The next six papers will treat various aspects of Christianity in History :

(vii) The first will deal with the Jewish contribution to Christianity in History, not simply in its origin, but in the Christian adoption of Jewish Scriptures, sacrificial concepts, organization, erastianism, etc.

(viii) The second will deal with the contribution of Hellenism to Christianity as we have it presented in Hatch's Hibbert Lectures, etc.

(ix) The third will deal with the Roman contribution to Christianity as presented in Renan's Hibbert Lectures, etc.

(x) The fourth will treat the world-renouncing or ascetic aspect of Christianity.

(xi) The fifth will deal with the world-accepting or mundane aspect of Christianity.

(xii) The sixth will deal with the world-transforming or world-redeeming aspect of Christianity.

Papers (vii)—(xii), though to some extent independent of papers (i)—(vi), have an important bearing upon the subjects there discussed : and this fact will be borne in mind.

(xiii) Paper thirteen will deal with the authority of Jesus Christ : with the nature of His authority, where rightly and where wrongly it can be claimed, and with the validity of the argument from dominical institutions.

(xiv) Paper fourteen will deal with the problem of the finality of Christianity.

Readers of our Conference Number will gratefully recognize that the authors of the papers assisted in no small degree the usefulness of the Conference by adhering very closely to the limitations imposed by the scheme.

The range covered by the Conference papers was immense, as the references and footnotes indicate in some cases. We append here a useful bibliography to Professor Burkitt's paper :—

On MARCION, see F. C. Burkitt, *The Gospel History and its Transmission*, ch. ix ; also C. W. Mitchell, *S. Ephraim's Prose Refutations*, Vol. II, pp. cxx—cxxii.

On MANI, see F. C. Burkitt, *The Religion of the Manichees*, esp. pp. 37—43.

On περιγραφή, see Alice Gardner, *Theodore of Studium*, pp. 161 (end), 165—168.

On CAVE ART, see M. C. Burkitt, *Our Forerunners* (Home University Series).

On the JEWISH REVOLT under JUDAS MACCABAEUS, see E. R. Bevan, *Jerusalem under the High Priests*, pp. 69—99 [published 1904 and still unsurpassed]. F. C. Burkitt, *Apocalypses Jewish and Christian*, pp. 1—16.

On the ACTS OF JOHN, see M. R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, pp. 250—256.

On RABBI, see F. C. Burkitt, *Christian Beginnings*, pp. 42—48.

Were we asked to select six volumes for educated laymen, which if studied would give them a just and luminous view of the Christian Religion in relation to European History, we should recommend the following :

(1) *Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion* by Auguste Sabatier.

(2) *The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church* by Edwin Hatch.

(3) *The Holy Roman Empire* by James Bryce.

(4) *The Reformation in its relation to Modern Thought and Knowledge* by Charles Beard.

(5) *The Continuity of Christian Thought* by A. V. G. Allen.

(6) *Dissent in its Relation to the Church of England* by G. H. Curteis.

But were they able only to read three, we should then recommend (1), (2) and (4).

The discussions of the Conference papers reached a distinctly higher level than last year. Unfortunate impressions of some of these discussions were given by sensational press reports. An earnest plea for effective

Modernist evangelism by an ardent Modernist layman, and the insistence on absolute truthfulness in giving Scriptural teaching to the young, appeared in the press as the pleas and protests of anti-Modernists on behalf of traditionalism. In consequence of another press report, forty clergy of the Rural Deanery of Ealing passed a resolution censuring their Rural Dean. Happily, at a full meeting of the Ruri-decanal Chapter the critics of the Rural Dean failed to carry their resolution.

Two items of interest not strictly within the Conference programme were valued by those who took part in them.

The authorities of Ely Cathedral thoughtfully selected an afternoon in the Conference week for unveiling a memorial to the late Canon and Mrs. Glazebrook in the shrine they loved so well. After the service, Dean Kirkpatrick most hospitably entertained the Conference members to tea in the Deanery, and then personally conducted them over the Cathedral. For those who had on former occasions been conducted over the Cathedral by our late Chairman and his wife, the occasion was full of memories, in which gratitude for a noble example of duty and leadership was not the least.

On the Wednesday afternoon, Dr. S. H. Nicholson, sometime Organist of Westminster Abbey, addressed the Conference on 'Beauty in Worship,' with special reference to the School of English Church Music which it is proposed to found in London for the practical training of Church musicians. It is not intended to compete with existing institutions. Its sole aim is to improve the quality of our English Church music. The endeavour has the hearty commendation of the Primate, but if it is to succeed wide support must be secured. The chief way of securing this is by the affiliation of church choirs to the School. The cost for each choir need not exceed £1 *per annum*. We desire to commend the undertaking to our readers. To our Church musicians we would dare to say: 'Do not think that the tune is everything and the words are nothing. If good words are spoilt by wretched music, good music loses not a little of its devotional value for intelligent Churchmen when combined with sentimental doggerel and verbal inanities.' We hope that our Modernist clergy will give this educational movement all the support in their power.*

TWO IMPORTANT QUESTIONS.

Behind the papers and discussions of the Conference there lurked in the minds of some who have faith in the spirit and methods of modern historical research as applied to the Scriptures, but who do not know enough to be able to judge of what may be regarded as its assured results, this question: Can we still believe in Jesus Christ as an historical person? Is the *Christus-myth* school, of which we heard a good deal in discussion, really justified in claiming that Jesus Christ was not an historical person, but was 'only a deity falsely changed into a man by tradition,' not a being of flesh and blood, but the creation of the religious consciousness of a community of worshippers?

Before attempting to indicate the nature of the evidence for Jesus having been an historical person, and where that evidence may be studied by those who are in no sense professed students, I would suggest that all who have doubts as to the historical existence of Jesus Christ should face and answer this question: What difference would it make or should it make, to my religion and mode of life, if it were proved that Jesus Christ is a mythical and not an historical person?

* The temporary address of the School of English Church Music is 105 Gower Street, London, W.C. 1.

IF JESUS IS UNHISTORIC, CAN WE STILL BE CHRISTIANS?

Many years ago the writer was cycling in Yorkshire with a distinguished Oxonian, a layman and a churchman, who had taken his two 'Firsts' at Balliol. As we talked of our religion, he said to me: 'Whether Jesus Christ lived or not, does not matter to me. I should be a Christian even if it turned out that He had never lived.' By this he meant that he should still strive to live in obedience to Christian principles and to worship the Divine Father as revealed in the Gospels. The Christian religion for him consisted in trying to do the will of God in daily life. Profession of belief in the articles of the Creed, mystical communion with the Risen Christ, were no part of the Christian religion as he lived it. I think he was like a large number of educated and uneducated men and women in this country. Now was my friend right—not only in his own case, but for mankind at large? Should we suffer no real religious loss if it were proved that Jesus Christ had never lived? You will say: What about the Incarnation, the Atonement, the Resurrection? Could we believe in them if Christ had never lived, and are they not essentially Christian doctrines, and should we not be the poorer spiritually if we did not believe in them? Certainly we should be the poorer if we did not believe in the Incarnation, Atonement, and Resurrection, which are essentially Christian doctrines; but it is possible, I think, to believe in the essential truth of each of these doctrines without believing in an historical Jesus. I will not argue that point now, but there is something to be said for it. I would merely remark that we have no difficulty in believing in the profound moral and spiritual truths set forth in the parable of the Prodigal Son because it is parable and not history. But the test of the Christian life is doing the will of God, and would the fact of the discovery that Jesus had never lived affect our conception of the will of God, or the sense of obligation to strive to do it? I think it would not for most thoughtful people. But would such a life be really entitled to be called Christian? Yes, it would. Christ's test was the test of works: the test of conduct and character: those words of His which ring in our ears, 'Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?' 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me?' would pass no condemnation on such a life, of which the dominating ideal was obedience to the Divine Will as set forth in the Synoptic Gospels. Such a form of the Christian religion, although its adherents had no belief in an actual historical Jesus, would yet be a great moral and spiritual force in the life of the individual and in the life of humanity at large. We do well to realize this, for some people speak as though if we lost the historical Jesus to-day we should also lose the Christian religion. I doubt it. We should still have a form of Christian religion which could find its realization in love to God and love to men—the fulfilment of the Two Great Commandments: we could still seek the blessings contained in the Beatitudes: we could still pray the Lord's Prayer. And these, let us not forget, are the very heart of the religion of Jesus. Would it be a small thing, either for ourselves or for mankind, to promote as the ideal of human life the love of God and man? Would it not be within our power, even if there were no historical Jesus, to realize one of the most profound of Christian experiences, as expressed by the writer of *I John*? 'We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren.'

There are a number of professing Christians who think that, if they became convinced that Jesus had no historical existence and was not crucified under Pontius Pilate, they must lapse, and mankind also, into a

life uninfluenced by the sense of Christian values and Christian standards of conduct—a life lived in the spirit of the words :

‘ I lived for myself, I thought of myself,
Of myself, and none beside,
Just as though Jesus had never lived,
As though He had never died.’

Such persons would do well to reflect on Lessing’s great saying :

‘ Historical truth, which is accidental in its character, can never become the proof of the truths of Reason, which are necessary.’

The moral and spiritual ideals of the Christian life cannot be proved absolutely true or false by any alleged historical event. No alleged historical event can prove to us absolutely that we ought to love the Eternal Goodness, that we ought to make the spirit of active unselfish service the governing spirit of our lives. Their proof is of quite another kind. Nevertheless, historical events can confirm our moral convictions and can inspire us to obey them.

When Dostoevsky wrote in *The Brothers Karamazov* :

‘ If Christ be not the Truth, then it were better to have the Christ without the Truth,’

he meant that the inspiring, uplifting power of the Christ of the Gospels is more precious to humanity than historical truth, unless of course that picture be historically true. This seems to be another way of saying that there are truths which may be more precious for humanity than the truth contained in historic facts—truths affirmed by our moral and rational consciousness but not proved in the sphere of historic events. Kant’s Categorical Imperative is of this kind. It is expressed in the saying : ‘ Right were right in scorn of consequence ’—and not only in scorn of consequence, but also in scorn of precedent—indeed, even if there were no historic facts at all to support it. History assists us ‘ faintly to trust the larger hope,’ but it does not speak to us with the authority of the moral consciousness.

I am not contending that Lessing has expressed the whole truth in his aphorism, but he has expressed a very needful side of it in an age which is vexed by critical questionings arising out of history and science. He who has the faith of the Christian Platonist, or even of Horace’s Just Man, is unperturbed by these things. There is need to stress this kind of Christian faith ‘ much more to-day, the faith which finds its rest in the eternal and not in the episodic. To those who maintain that faith needs historic facts, it is well to point out that ‘ facts can never so express and give evidence of the objects of faith as to convey to it the certainty it needs.’

Yet while I would not vilify reason and conscience, I have no desire to vilify history. In history, as in nature, there is a continuous evolution, and this is the revelation of reason. ‘ If,’ as Dr. Garvie points out, ‘ there be an all embracing and all directing purpose, historical truths are not accidental, but events having meaning and worth as means to this end.’* If history does contain such a fact as the personality, and acts, and teaching of Jesus, it is, in view particularly of all that has occurred in human history as a result of that fact, a most significant fact, and furnishes mankind with new truth which has an important bearing on the relation of the human to the divine, and so provides us with much to assist the development of the

* *Jesus or Christ?* (Eighteen Essays by various authors.) p. 169. (Williams and Norgate, 1909.)

higher life in us, by convincing us that that life has its sanctions not only in our rational and moral consciousness, but also in certain facts in the historical process—facts which add a significance, vividness, and reality to it. Our English poets, Clough, Browning, and Tennyson, with the serious moral and religious feeling of the Victorians, addressed themselves to various aspects of the problem of the relation of the Jesus of History to the Idea of the Christian Religion. Clough's noble poem, *Easter Day*, I & II (1847), 'Christ is not risen,' Browning's *Christmas Eve* and *Easter Day* even nobler, but, noblest of all, Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, treat the theme from different angles. But Tennyson, although he wrote his poem before the publication of *The Origin of Species*, is the most modern in his ability to do justice to both points of view:

Tho' truths in manhood darkly join,
Deep-seated in our mystic frame,
We yield all blessing to the name
Of Him who made them current coin.

IS JESUS AN HISTORICAL PERSON?

But to turn now to the other question. Can we believe that there was a Jesus of History, or was He a myth? This question has been discussed on and off for the last one hundred and forty years in France, Germany, England and America. There was a notable controversy on this point in Germany and England in the first two decades of this century. It raised its head in England with J. M. Robertson's *Christianity and Mythology* published in 1900, and received its *coup de grâce* from F. C. Conybeare's *The Historical Christ* (an investigation of the views of Mr. J. M. Robertson, Dr. A. Drews, and Prof. W. B. Smith) published by the Rationalist Press in 1914. In Germany it began with Kalthoff in 1903, and Maurenbrecher, Kautsky, Jensen, W. B. Smith, Drews, Stendel, Lublinski, W. Schultz and others contributed volumes to it in favour of the mythological view, while Holtzmann, Wernle, von Soden, Jülicher, Weinle, J. Weiss and a number of other scholars contributed volumes in favour of the historic view. I mention these names to indicate the magnitude of the subject and the interest it aroused. It is a matter with which Christian teachers should be acquainted, for the mythological view was put forward with a great display of erudition, notably in certain cases by leaders of the social-democratic movement, and it has become popular with many educated men of the artizan class, and although, as we hold, the contentions of the mythologists were conclusively answered, the answers are not known in circles where the mythological volumes were read or possibly extracts from them cited.

It will seem amazing to plain people, when we have a whole literature like our Four Gospels and the other writings of the New Testament, which assume as absolutely certain the existence of the historic Jesus and tell us a great deal about Him, that anyone can doubt that He was an historic personage. It seems equally strange, when we have a great institution like the Christian Church, which commemorates His shameful death in its chief sacramental rite and His resurrection on its weekly sacred day, that anyone can doubt that He was crucified. It seems almost equally significant that while the Jews, who were the bitterest opponents of the Christian Church, contradicted many things the Christians taught about Jesus—denying His virgin birth, His sinlessness, the resurrection of His body, etc.—they never denied His being an historic person.

It is the weakness of non-Christian evidence to the existence of Jesus

which has lent strength to the mythological theory. On several occasions at the Gorton Conference reference was made to the testimony of Josephus. Josephus was born of a high-priestly family in Jerusalem in 38 A.D. He witnessed the awful carnage of the Roman-Jewish war, when Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D. He was intensely interested in Judaism; he was a profound student of it; and he was also one of the great historians of antiquity. He wrote the Jewish history of his own times, yet it is very doubtful if he ever refers in his writings to Jesus. Renan believed that he did, but it is thought by many that the passages have been interpolated. The first undoubted non-Christian testimony to Jesus is by Tacitus, who lived about 52 A.D. to 120 A.D. He was the great historian of Imperial Rome. He writes in his *Annals* XV, iv, 4:

'The author of this name [Christian] Christus was executed in the reign of Tiberius by the Procurator Pontius Pilate, and the detested superstition, suppressed for a time, broke out again, and spread not only over Judaea, where the evil originated, but even through Rome.'

Suetonius, a Roman historian, born about 70 A.D., and Pliny the Younger, born in 61 A.D., a Roman Governor, also refer to Christ. Certainly the evidence is slight, but Jesus of Nazareth in the eye of Roman imperial historians was a very insignificant person in that great empire of a hundred million souls.

It is among Christian writers that we get the most inspiring evidence. All critics accept St. Paul's epistles to the Corinthians and Galatians as genuine. In I *Corinthians* ix, 5, he speaks of 'the brethren of the Lord,' and in *Galatians* i, 19, he refers to 'James, the brother of the Lord.' He does it in such a way as to indicate that they were persons who were very well known to his readers. The descendants of these 'brethren of the Lord,' according to the great Church historian, Eusebius, the friend of Constantine the Great, survived for several generations in a humble condition. It is impossible to account for these brethren of Jesus if He Himself were not a human being.

Those who wish to read the argument against the mythological school can find it accurately and justly presented in four books in the English tongue: the first two by Englishmen, the third by an American, the fourth by a German. (1) *The Historic Christ*, by F. C. Conybeare (Watts and Co., 1914); (2) *Jesus the Christ: Historical or Mythical?* by T. J. Thorburn (T. & T. Clark, 1912); (3) *The Historicity of Jesus*, by S. J. Case (University of Chicago Press, 1912); (4) *What is the Truth about Jesus Christ?* by Friedrich Loofs (T. & T. Clark, 1913). I would fain add a fifth document, the chapter (iv) entitled 'Jesus of Nazareth' in that most brilliant and enthralling of all Professor Glover's writings, *The Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire* (Methuen, 1909). It does not treat the mythological issue, but it gives the ineffaceable impression to its reader, such as he derives from the careful comparative study of the Synoptic Gospels, that he is walking on the solid ground of historical fact. As he rises from its perusal and from that of the Synoptists, he can put to himself Weinel's question and will feel himself able to answer it in Weinel's way: 'Do we know Jesus? Yes, we know Him very well indeed.' This passage from Weinel is only in seeming conflict with one often cited from Schweitzer. (Knowledge in Weinel's sense is *kennen*, *connaître*; in Schweitzer's, *wissen*, *savoir*.) We may dismiss the mythological Jesus theory with the remark that it seems as grotesque to the scholarly student of the New Testament as Anglo-Israelism does to the critical scholar of the Old Testament.

THE CHRISTIAN INTERPRETATION OF HISTORY

By the Very Rev. W. R. INGE, C.V.O., D.D., F.B.A., Dean of St. Paul's.

THE subject chosen for me by the Committee who arranged this Conference is 'The Christian Interpretation of History,' not 'The Historical Interpretation of Christianity.' I am to give my views on the importance and significance of history for a Christian. Of history—that is to say, of history in general, not of the historical element in Christianity. But is there any philosophy of history which has the right to call itself the Christian interpretation of history? We find an outline of such an interpretation, a very interesting one, in the Epistle to the Hebrews. But during by far the greater part of Church history—and I suppose the historical school would wish us to treat the Church itself historically—history counted for very little. The only significant parts of it were four revolutionary catastrophes, three in the past and one in the near future; the creation of the world out of nothing; the Fall of man from a state of innocence; the Incarnation of the Son of God; and the last day. The melioristic view, according to which history records an ascending movement, whether in a straight line, or in a spiral, or, as some are prepared to admit, in epicycloids, is quite modern, and was imported into theology from alien sources. *Historismus* dates from the reaction against the rationalism of the *Aufklärung*. It is a philosophy characteristic of what has been called the Century of Hope. It is not distinctively Christian, and in fact appeals most strongly to those whose hopes for humanity are exclusively secularist. I do not see how I can avoid making my paper largely a criticism, not however wholly hostile, of this prevalent historicism, from the standpoint of Christianity as I understand it. The Presidential Address is intended to be popular, and I shall try to avoid abstruse philosophical arguments; but the question cuts very deep, for it involves the relation of time to eternity, and there is no harder problem than this in the whole range of thought.

By history we usually mean the record of past events, as they are believed to have occurred. Until our own time, historians have usually been intentionally didactic, poetical, romantic, controversial, or philosophic. Now we are told that Clio is no longer a Muse; she is transferred to the more severe company of the sciences. Her business is to give us facts and figures only. If the biography of ideas is included, considerations of value must be kept out as far as possible.

We must therefore make up our minds whether we mean by history this bare reconstruction of past happenings, or the earlier type of history, in which events come to us already embroidered, coloured, and explained by historians. Whichever way we take it, there is and has been a good deal of scepticism about the value of the whole study. Sir Robert Walpole on a sick bed, when he was asked to choose what kind of book should be read to him, said, 'Anything but history; I know that can't be true.' Samuel Butler remarks that though the Deity is said to be unable to alter the past, historians can and do. Perhaps, he adds, that is why the Deity allows them to exist.

Among more serious estimates, you will remember this passage in Goethe's 'Faust.'

'To us, my friend, the times that are gone by
Are a mysterious book, sealed with seven seals;
That which you call the spirit of ages past
Is but in truth the spirit of some few authors
In which those ages are beheld reflected,
With what distortion strange, heaven only knows . . .
A mass of things confusedly heaped together;
A lumber-room of dusty documents,
Furnished with all approved court-precedents
And old traditional maxims. History!
Facts dramatised, say rather, action, plot,
Sentiment, everything the writer's own,
As it best fits the web-work of his story,
With here and there a solitary fact
Of consequence, by those grave chroniclers
Pointed with many a moral apophthegm
And wise old saws learned at the puppet-shows.'

Tennyson too in a well-known couplet says:

'For nothing worthy proving can be proven
Nor yet disproven.'

Tennyson's words interpret, no doubt correctly, Goethe's meaning. Some facts in the past are certain enough, but are

they the important facts? I mean especially, are they important for religion, for philosophy, for ethics? Many historical problems are interesting for the historian—any subject is interesting when you go deep into it—but do they matter for you and me? The vexed question by which pass Hannibal crossed the Alps may be solved with tolerable certainty by finding the remains of an African elephant under a glacier. There is no doubt about the date and manner of the murder of Julius Cæsar. Historians may make up their minds whether our patron saint St. George killed dragons, or whether he was a dishonest army-contractor who poisoned the Roman soldiers with bad beef. They may convince us whether St. Joan was all that French patriotism, the Pope, and Mr. Shaw have declared her to be, or whether she was a barmaid who became a regimental mascot. But when we come to the things that matter for the present and future, how much do we know for certain?

The motives for falsifying history are in exact proportion to the interest of posterity in knowing the truth. Falsified history has perhaps had more influence than true history. Consider the political side of the Church of Rome, with its forged title-deeds, its mythical saints, its bogus miracles, and the unquestionable influence which all this garbled history has had in moulding the actual history of Europe. Consider the patriotic figments on which the children of all countries are brought up, and the wars which have been caused by the national arrogance and hatred so fostered. Consider the martial ardour, the generous admiration, the devoted loyalty which have been aroused by the contemplation of heroes who perhaps, like General John Regan in Canon Hannay's story, never existed at all, or who, if they did exist, were anything rather than heroic. If we are to trace causes and effects in human affairs, it is not the actual facts that we shall have to hunt for; it is the play of the imagination directed upon certain names and scenes. History is not much more than what Napoleon said it was, a *fable convenue*; and whenever we have several contemporary accounts of a past event, we can take our choice between as many contradictory narratives. The only undisputed facts—of course there are many of them—are those which it is worth nobody's while to misrepresent. For the rest, *magnum est mendacium et praevallet*.

Since it is at least possible to take this sceptical view of the records of the past—and I have shown that some very eminent men have done so—we cannot be surprised to read in Prof. Bosanquet's Gifford Lectures an energetic protest against the modern tendency to say, 'The actual is wholly historical.' 'History,' says Bosanquet, 'is a hybrid form of experience, incapable of any considerable degree of being or trueness. The doubtful story of successive events cannot amalgamate with the complete interpretation of the social mind, of art, and of religion. These interpretations, when attempted in connexion with a narrative of events, fall into separate chapters, isolated from the narrative. The great things, which are necessary in themselves, become within the narrative contingent, or are ascribed, by most doubtful assumptions of insight, to this actor or that on the historical stage. The study of Christianity is the study of a great world-experience; the assignment to individuals of shares in its development is a problem for scholars, whose conclusions, though of considerable human interest, can never be of supreme importance.'

This quotation reminds us that there are in reality two separate questions. First, can the past be recovered for us in such a way that we may be reasonably certain of the factual reality of those events which have, or may have, practical importance to us as a guide in the present? It is the living past that we wish to recover; the dead past, events which have not entered organically into the life of humanity, is of interest only to antiquarians. Second, if we could determine the significance to ourselves of past history, should we find that significance to be of primary or only of subordinate importance?

As regards the first, the possibility of knowing significant events in the past, the thought will already have occurred to some of my hearers that if we treat history as the biography of ideas, or of ideals, we are on much firmer ground than when we confine ourselves to a narrative of external events. There is no uncertainty, in the region of fact, about the teaching of a great prophet. The records, for the most part though by no means invariably, are authentic; we have only to understand them and to relate them to present problems. Yet even here we must not forget Bosanquet's warning of the strong tendency to hero-worship in human nature. The great man would often not have

been great if he had lived at any other time or in any other place, and the achievements which we ascribe to him belong in truth to a complex of forces which it is impossible to analyse. For example, there are some who regard Lenin as the greatest historical figure of our time. Scientific history will levy a large discount on this romanticism. It will call attention to the servile tradition in the Russian people, to the subversive propaganda of the *intelligentsia*, to the apocalyptic anabaptism of the organic religious sects, to the sudden collapse of the imperial government, which was a pyramid balanced on its apex—to these and other causes which threw the reins of power into the hands of a sombre and ruthless fanatic, a half-insane dreamer, a romantic behind all his bitter materialism, and so made possible a régime which has been well described as barbarous Jesuitry. Even Napoleon confessed that he ‘could not replace himself’; what he called his ‘star’ was the unique conjunction of events which made his career possible.

Allowing for the distortions caused by the tendency to concentrate deep and wide social movements under the name of one man, we may say that history as a biography of ideas, or ideals, is not subject to the same paralysing uncertainty which infects history as a narrative of events or a series of human biographies.

The question, however, must be asked whether the processes of thought, which we wish to study historically, necessarily run parallel with the sequence of events. Hegel, as we know, treated history as a grandiose scheme, the progressive self-evolution of the Absolute Spirit in time. Contrast his dictum, ‘The real is the rational,’ with Troeltsch’s, ‘The historical always has an element of irrationality.’ But Hegel, like all other men, was the child and the product of his own age. He lived when the buoyant and romantic optimism of the French *philosophes*, with their dogma of human perfectibility, was very much in the air. In spite of all that his modern disciples have said to the contrary, it is surely manifest that he assumed the parallelism of logical and temporal development. With a sovereign disregard of historical details, he attempted to reconstruct history as the externalisation of the dialectical process. But there is no necessary connexion whatever between the two. It may often happen that the later speakers in a debate are able to profit by the wisdom of the earlier, and that in this way the process of time contributes

to the progress of philosophy, as it certainly has done to the progress of science. But logical development is strictly independent of history. Some, forgetting this, have felt it a serious objection to the position which Christians give to Christ, that He lived nineteen hundred years ago. By the same reasoning we ought to wonder whether Epstein should not be ranked as a greater sculptor than Pheidias. The fact is that though in tracing the biography of ideas we may reach real knowledge, that knowledge is not really historical, since it is independent of the time-succession.

This brings us to our second question. Is the process of events in the time-series of primary or of only secondary importance in philosophical and religious thought? This is a purely metaphysical question, and I think it is to be dealt with more fully in one of the papers to be read at this Conference. I cannot omit it altogether in this introductory address, though to treat it fully and adequately in so short a time as I have at my disposal would be impossible. But I remember that my subject is the *Christian* interpretation of history; and it is certain, at any rate to me, that the philosophy of the New Realists and the New Idealists alike—and on this subject they are curiously near together—is incompatible with Christianity. For this reason, a summary treatment may perhaps be excused.

We have seen how Hegel confounded the logical with the historical process of development, under the influence, perhaps, of the heady French doctrine of perfectibility. But the peculiarity of Hegel's doctrine is that he conceived the dialectical process in history as purely political, and as completed in his own time and country. He gives us a closed system; the Absolute, it seems, had finally found himself in the Prussian monarchy of the Hohenzollerns. In Fichte, on the other hand, progress is a *progressus ad infinitum*. The goal is known, but will never be fully reached. He does not condescend to learn from history. 'The philosopher,' he says, 'follows the *a priori* thread of the world-plan which is plain to him without any history; and if he makes use of history, it is not to prove anything, since his theses are already proved independently of all history.' Reason is incarnate in the world, in the mind of the philosopher.

Nothing can be more alien to modern thought than this high *a priori* road to truth. But some of the nineteenth century scien-

tists also adopted, and indeed in a more extravagant form, the dogma of perfectibility, without, apparently, reflecting how incompatible it is with experience and with science alike. Darwin writes: 'As natural selection works solely by and for the good of each being, all corporeal and mental environments will tend to progress towards perfection.' What, we may ask, has natural selection to do with 'progress' in the environment? Spencer, really toppling over into absurdity, says: 'The ultimate development of the ideal man is logically certain—as certain as any conclusion in which we place the most implicit faith; for instance, that all men will die.' This is not the theory of the French Encyclopaedists, who believed that only good laws and good education are needed to elicit the natural perfection of human nature. For Spencer, each generation inherits the acquired excellencies of the last, and, so standing on its shoulders, adds new cubits to its stature, till the heavens are reached. We need not discuss which of the two views is the more absurd and unscientific.

Now that the dreams of the eighteenth century ideologists have become not only obsolete but unintelligible, it is the more extraordinary to find more than one school of modern philosophy treating history after the manner of naïve realism, subordinating reality to the category of time, and reasserting the crudest doctrines about human progress as the very warp and woof of ultimate reality. I will take as my example the Italian Croce, the New Idealist, though I am afraid much the same doctrine might be found in the New Realist Prof. Alexander, and even in James Ward. Croce says: 'From the cosmic point of view, reality displays itself as a continual growing upon itself; nor can a real regress be conceived, because evil, being that which is not, is unreal, and that which is, is always good. Cosmic progress then is an object of affirmation, not problematic but apodeictic.' 'The Spirit, which has effected the transition from animal to human life, is creating modes of life ever more lofty. The infinity of our desire is the proof of the infinity of our progress.' You observe that for Croce not only is reality mere 'becoming,' but the temporary instability of one species on one planet is exalted into the law of all time and all existence. If there is a God, He is Himself evolving in the cosmic process. But this humanistic positivism does better without a God. Its

view of life is petty and provincial, in its narrow anthropocentrism, to the last degree. I entirely agree with Laurence Binyon, who says : 'Absorption in man as the centre of the world and the hero of existence leads certainly to loss of that sanity and sweetness which an openness to the abiding presence of the non-human living world around us infuses into life. It is not by that absorption that we shall find the full meaning or animating power of our western faith that in man the divinity is revealed.'

I assume that no faith can call itself Christian which does not assert the existence of an eternal transcendent Creator-God, whose own life is above time and change. Since then these philosophies, and others like them, exclude the idea of such a Being, we may I think dismiss them, not without a sense of relief, from our consideration to-day.

But it is worth while to ask the question why earnest and competent thinkers in our time have committed themselves to a view of the cosmos which has the disadvantage of being the only view which can be definitely and completely refuted. For we know certainly that we men have only a leasehold on this planet, so that the terrestrial paradise of which we dream can never be ours for long. If God is realising Himself in the political and social institutions of the orb which revolves between Mars and Venus, a *Ragnarok* awaits Him as surely as the Scandinavian gods were doomed to go down before the revolt of Niflheim.

It is supposed that we have to choose between a belief in an everlasting upward movement and acceptance of the dismal theory that history has no meaning and no purpose; that all human aspirations after a better-ordered life are an illusion and a mockery; that the time-process is either unreal or irrational; and that hope is a mere bait hung out by a Power which laughs at the heroisms of the most restless and the most pitiable of all creatures.

I hope to show before the end of this address how far I am from holding this view, which would really be pessimistic. Here I will only say this. If God is bound up with His creation; if He has no life but the life of His creatures; if the perfecting of His nature depends on the continuance of those species in which He is striving to realize Himself; if, lastly, the hopes of mankind can be realized only in history and on this earth; then indeed we must choose between a surrender of our hopes and aspirations,

and the dream of a wholly this-worldly indefectible salvation which our knowledge of the world around us and its inevitable laws forbids us seriously to entertain. But if God is an eternal and unchanging Being, He may have finite purposes which like all finite things have a beginning, middle, and end. If He has eternal life, His creatures made in His image need not fear temporal death. If He is exalted above time, the creatures of time, with their doings and their hopes, may live unto Him after their brief hour on the stage is ended.

This brings me to the second part of my subject—the views which have been actually held in the Christian Church about the meaning and value of history. I think we may classify them under three heads, of which the first may be called the catastrophic view, the second the meliorist. The third is much more difficult to name. If I call it the Johannine view, it is not because this name is at all obviously descriptive. But it seems to me that in the Fourth Gospel we have, almost for the first time, a clear view of history as educational, combined with a firm faith in an eternal background, without which temporal happenings would have no meaning or value.

First, then, we will consider the catastrophic view, to which I have already referred briefly. It has often been said that the Hebrews assigned to the course of history a meaning which the Greeks did not find in it. But the Hebrew philosophy of history, if one may speak of such a thing in a very unphilosophic people, began with the mere desire to exonerate a tribal God from responsibility for the sufferings of a much-tormented little nation, set down in the cockpit where the great Powers of the day sometimes fought out their quarrels. It was a very simple philosophy. Jehovah rewarded his people for faithfulness, and punished them if they went after other gods. The question, 'Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?' could only be answered in the affirmative, and yet how much there was to explain! We know how under the guidance of the prophets the Hebrews arrived at last at a very noble faith; but except for an indomitable hopefulness we can hardly speak of a reasoned theory of the value of history.

The Greeks were strangely indifferent both to their past and their future, when we consider the alertness and curiosity of their minds. They had comparatively few historical traditions; they

did not cherish the monuments of their past. Their most favoured historical theory was that time revolves in vast cycles, which bring back, perhaps even in detail, the events of the corresponding period of the last cycle. Progress and retrogression alternate. Even the arts, Aristotle thought, had been many times discovered and then lost.

The Church succeeded to these two traditions. The Christians rejected entirely the theory of cycles. History was unique, and never to be repeated. But the authority of the Church was exerted in cutting down the span of history in a deplorable manner. Plato's Great Year, probably a Babylonian astrological period, was 36,000 years; that of the Stoics was 6,570,000 years. But the Church, tied to the chronology of Genesis, allowed only 4,000 years between the creation and the birth of Christ. The future was even more restricted. No one looked forward to a long period of gradual progress. The course of history would be satisfactory and complete if the end of the world came at once, as it was half expected to do. It is not easy for us to put ourselves into the mental condition of men who expected no earthly future. Our own hopes and fears—especially our hopes—have a long range, and we frequently console ourselves for the many disappointments of experience by dwelling in thought on the much happier conditions which our posterity may enjoy. But how little incentive there was for trying to improve social and material conditions, when the only result of our efforts would be to increase the expensiveness of the final crash! No doubt there was still some idea of a millennium on earth, but this lingering belief, which has broken out again and again in Europe as the result of mental unrest and as the cause of social disturbance, was not in the main current of mediaeval thought.

The notion of gradual development towards a higher state was almost wholly absent. It was believed that human nature, if left to itself, would drift downwards towards the City of Destruction. Part of humanity was rescued from this doom by supernatural interventions. The dualism of natural and supernatural made divine interposition necessarily catastrophic, and forbade any trust in nature working by normal methods.

The catastrophic, miraculous view of history is wholly alien from modern ways of thinking. But it cannot be denied that the doctrine of a historical Incarnation belongs to this view of his-

tory, which in general we have discarded. It is not an easy problem to fit our traditional belief in a divine-human Redeemer, inaugurating a new dispensation for humanity, into our modern scheme of world-history as an organic whole, obeying uniform laws.

The problem has been met in different ways by Liberal Protestantism and by Catholic Modernism. The school of Ritschl and Harnack seems to take an anti-evolutionary view of Church history. For them, the revelation was final and perfect in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Subsequent religious history has been mainly a story of reversion, corruption, and apostasy, against which the Reformation of the sixteenth century was a courageous but not very effectual protest. By their rejection of mysticism, this school is committed to a backward look. Christ is for them the perfect example, the supreme law-giver, rather than a 'life-giving Spirit.' If this statement does injustice—to Harnack, let us say—and it does, the reason is that his estimate of the historical Christ is not so rigidly historical as it pretends to be. Harnack has his ideal of pure religion, and he selects those aspects of the Gospel which sanction and support that ideal, ignoring other aspects. He professes to derive his inspiration from the Gospel record only, but in reality his portrait of Christ is coloured by his hopes of a new Protestant Reformation on very modern lines. It would be brutal, but not wholly untrue, to say that many modern writers galvanize the historical Christ by dressing Him up as a nineteenth or twentieth century Englishman, German, or Frenchman. In the little book, *The Man Whom Nobody Knows*, He is draped as a very typical Yankee. This is a rather violent expedient for forcing a catastrophic Figure into an evolutionary scheme.

The philosophy of history of the Roman Catholic Church is supernaturalistic dualism, and therefore anti-evolutionary. It has some affinity with apocalypticism, but none with nineteenth century Liberalism. When Pius IX in 1864 flung in the face of the modern world his Syllabus Errorum, and concluded his list of eighty errors by condemning the thesis that 'the Roman Pontiff can and ought to reconcile himself with progress, Liberalism, and modern civilization,' he was proclaiming with characteristic courage the irreconcilable antagonism between the mediaeval and the modern view of history. Catholic Modernism wishes to

jettison the theory of miraculous interventions, and to place Catholicism within an evolutionary framework. The Church, from this point of view, is a living and progressive organism, which has adapted itself to its environment, and changed as all living organisms must change. The Jesus of history was merely the nucleus round whom the society grouped itself. The Christ of the Church's worship has no essential resemblance to the Galilean prophet; the continuity is merely historical; we must acknowledge 'comme deux Christs.' Thus the catastrophic view of history is abandoned, and worship is transferred from a historical Person to the hypostatized genius of a corporation. The historical Jesus is lost for the Church, though He remains, along with many mythical figures, as an object of emotional piety. Devotion to the Church, as a purely historical and political society, is merely a form of rather fanatical patriotism. The official Church soon recognized the revolutionary character of Modernist apologetic, and repudiated it with great sternness. It is plain, I think, that neither Harnack nor Loisy has solved the problem of finding room for the Incarnation in history as we understand it.

Before passing to the meliorist view of history, we may consider briefly whether the catastrophic view contains any elements of truth. Some very modern thinkers find a metaphysical significance in the 'Quantum' theory, which makes the movements of electrons discontinuous, much as we see the minute-hand of a station clock jumping from minute to minute, instead of moving evenly. I am very sceptical about the philosophical importance of either Einstein's corrections of Newton, or of the Quantum theory. Nor am I prepared to admit that the appearance of life, or of consciousness, on the earth was necessarily an abrupt break with the past, a sudden emergence of an entirely new type. It is partly a matter of temperament, but I should be slow to give up the old maxim that *Natura nihil facit per saltum*. Modern revolutionary movements seem to me more like a refutation of apocalypticism than a confirmation of it. For surely what revolutions do is to make comparatively small changes at a wholly disproportionate cost. You may stop a clock by causing the pendulum to oscillate violently; but when it starts again, if you can make it start again, it will swing much as before. The only value that I can see in the catastrophic view of history is that it

recognises the reality of spiritual forces, the formidable power, for good and evil, of collective enthusiasms, and the error of regarding history as the mere mechanical unpacking of what was there all the time. Supernaturalism has its rights, as a protest against naturalism. But if we believe in an organic relation between the world, man and God, we cannot accept a régime of miracle and sporadic interference as ultimately credible.

The meliorist view is that the Creator has a design in the life of humanity as a whole, in which accordingly we ought to be able to trace a gradual progress, not so much in the external paraphernalia of civilizations as in the moral and spiritual possibilities of human beings. The ideal end, for the Christian meliorist, is a Christophany in redeemed humanity itself. This is the Christian form of that doctrine of progress, even of perfectibility, which we have found to be the characteristic gospel of the anti-religious French *philosophes*, and the lay religion of Western Europe in the nineteenth century. It was an impossible opinion within the cramped framework of mediaeval cosmology. But it may have much more justification when we think no longer in years but in millennia. Although, as has been already said, the ultimate doom of our planet is certain, it is highly probable that we have hundreds of thousands, even perhaps millions, of years in which to work out our salvation as a species. The notion that civilised man is a very new experiment of nature has hardly yet sunk into our minds. Throw back the beginnings of civilization as far as you will; date the wall-paintings of the old Stone Age forty or even fifty thousand years ago, and civilised man is still only an infant. As far as the time-limit goes, we might almost as well be freeholders; there is no difference, I believe, between the present value of a 999 years' lease and the fee simple. It is also a new thing to be able to trace our pedigree back to those whom we are accustomed to call the lower animals. 'Homo sapiens' does not deserve his title; but at least he is more intelligent than a chimpanzee, and a million years hence he may really be a noble creature.

On the other hand, if the non-transmissibility of acquired characteristics is established, progress must be exceedingly slow, and dependent either on the accident of a favourable environment or on rational selection. For mere accumulations of experience, which leave human nature unchanged, are illusory

signs of progress, and give no security against reversion to barbarism. It is quite possible, on merely biological grounds, that the advance of our species may be an unusual and temporary phenomenon, to be followed by an indefinitely long period of stagnation and unconscious habit, such as we see in the advanced but soulless and unchanging civilizations of the bees, ants and termites. The new knowledge gives us the possibility of further progress, and even the probability of it; it cannot guarantee it as a certainty.

But it is useless to talk about progress until we know what we mean by it. If it means the increase of wants and of the means to gratify them; if it means greater control over nature, and more power to utilize its forces; if it means a reduced death-rate and better health; if it means more and sounder education, there can be no doubt that we live in an age of progress. But as Christians, while we welcome most of these things as belonging to what the Stoics called 'preferables,' things which we should choose to have rather than to go without, they are not absolute goods. Before we can talk about progress, we have to get our minds clear as to what are our ultimate values. What the Christian values are we all know from the New Testament and the best Christian men and women. The question for us here is whether we are justified in taking a meliorist view of history as Christians. Are the conditions for leading a Christ-like life more favourable now than they were in our Lord's time, in the Middle Ages, or before the industrial revolution? We are not bound to discuss whether it is better to be a man than an ape, or a civilized man rather than a savage. Let these be granted; but it still remains questionable whether the conditions for leading the highest life are more favourable under a highly developed industrial civilization than in societies where life is simpler and less hurried.

Now I am quite unable to answer this question. I do not know whether it is better to be a shepherd or a miner or a tradesman or a lawyer, nor whether it was easier or harder to be a Christian under Justinian, Charlemagne, or Queen Anne than it is under King George V. I am not prepared to justify or condemn a theory of historical meliorism. It may be that God has a plan for the progressive development of humanity in goodness, wisdom and love of the beautiful, or it may be that He has no

such plan. From the Christian point of view it makes no essential difference to God whether His creatures advance towards perfection or not. His own life is not involved in our fortunes.

I therefore think that it is a matter of taste whether we adopt the meliorist view of history or not. It is no part of Christian theology, though people often suppose that it is. The advance of civilization is a worthy object to strive for, and we may believe that in doing our little best to further it we are pleasing God by doing our duty in our generation. More than this I am not prepared to say. Our present civilization is not in all respects an admirable thing, though I have no sympathy with those who abuse it. We are perhaps careful and troubled about too many things. We have perhaps complicated life too much. Perhaps it would not be a good thing to be able to gratify all our standardized wants by pressing buttons. These are legitimate subjects for discussion; but they do not touch the question whether the course of time has brought to light any new absolute values, or made those which have long been recognized as such more accessible. The notion that the race-spirit has a life of its own, and is being slowly educated by God, is a tenable notion, but it is not part of the Christian revelation.

Before leaving this section of my subject, I should like to consider the chapter of 'Microcosmus' in which Lotze criticizes the melioristic view of history. In this great book few subjects are handled without some light being shed upon them.

In answer to the optimism of the progressists, he reminds us that even when the new life of a society is better than the old, it nearly everywhere rises out of the ruins of the old at the cost of painful sacrifices. The well-meant comparison with the different stages of human life brings no explanation of this apparently wasteful method. Nor is the common phrase that history is the education of humanity free from difficulty. 'Humanity' is an abstract notion. Men and women can enjoy and suffer and learn wisdom by experience; but how can we speak of the education of a disconnected series of lives, in which the proper business of education, which is to bring one mind or character to perfection, cannot be carried out? (To this we might answer that a less individualistic view of humanity is quite possible, and, many will think, more Christian.) He proceeds, that the existence of a mass of ignorant and wretched human beings is hard to reconcile

with the idea of history as an education of humanity. (But while we admit that the problem of a perfect society has so far eluded us, we cannot, as Christians, assume that even severe poverty is necessarily unfavourable to the growth of a spiritual life.) A more acute criticism is that the way in which the culture of past times is for the most part handed down leads directly to the exact opposite of that at which historical development should aim; it leads, that is, to an *instinct* of culture, which continually takes up more and more of the elements of civilization, thus making them a lifeless possession, and withdrawing them from the sphere of conscious activity. The elevating freshness and joyousness that distinguish an age of invention and discovery are not transmitted to the ages which are its heirs. Scientific truths, hard-won principles of social morality, revelations of religious enthusiasm and artistic intuition, are all subject to this devitalization. Men commonly enjoy the fruits of inventions with a certain coarse unthankfulness, without a gleam of interest or curiosity in the mental labour that produced them. It is strange to reflect among how very few minds all that we call modern knowledge is distributed.

Lotze then mentions the alternative though not very different theory that humanity as a unitary whole is realizing in the lives of individuals the Idea immanent in it from the first. I have already said that this is a philosophical notion which we may hold if we like; but we must not say that as Christians we are committed to it.

Shall we then, Lotze asks, agree with those who altogether deny history in the sense of a progressive development on earth? Shall we follow those mystics who wish to interpose nothing external and contingent between the soul and God? If we carry this flight from the world to its logical conclusion, we shall find only vacancy; for he who has experienced nothing is made no wiser by solitude, and Nature teaches little to him who knows not man. If we do not go so far as this, we may fairly ask whether history can achieve anything outside its own plane, whether temporal activities can have eternal consequences. But here we are too near the 'licentious' lines of Pope, quoted by Boswell:

'Can sins of moments claim the rod
Of everlasting fires?'

Our moral sense protests against denying that temporal advance is a real good. Lotze makes the interesting observation that we never *envy* the good fortune of those who are to come after us; our wish for their happiness is purely disinterested. 'This,' he says, 'may well tend to confirm our belief that there is some unity of history transcending that of which we are conscious, a unity in which we cannot merely say of the past that it is not—a unity, rather, in which all that has been inexorably divided by the temporal course of history has a co-existence independent of time; in which finally the benefits produced in time are not lost for those who helped to win but did not enjoy them.'

'All human longing to find a guiding thread in the confused variety of history springs from the unselfish desire to recognize worthy and sacred order in the system and course of the world.' Humanity does not consist in a general type-character, nor in a mere mass of scattered individuals. It consists in that real and living community which brings together men past, present and future, all in the order which they hold in the growing whole. History is not a slender line dividing two nothingnesses, unborn to-morrow and dead yesterday; it points to and actually deals with a permanent reality beyond the flux.

This, says Lotze, is a matter of faith only. Observation shows us in history only a path leading from an unknown beginning to an unknown end, and our guesses as to its general direction are vague and uncertain. But the faith in question is what we actually feel in our best moments.

These reflections of Lotze base meliorism on the faith that life in the world must have a worthy purpose, and on our stubborn refusal to regard the past and future as non-existent, or as valueless for ourselves. They will serve to help us in passing to the third attitude of religious thought towards history, that which I have chosen to associate with the teaching of the Fourth Gospel.

The relevant parts of the religious philosophy of this mystical treatise, which often puzzles its readers because it is a book *sui generis*, the only extant specimen of this *genre* of composition, are as follows:

The divine Logos, co-eternal with God the Father, was and is the agent in creation, in which, though He is eternally 'with God,' He lives as the source of its life, and especially as 'the

light of men,' the inspirer of reason, wisdom and love. All the life of creation is His; He was 'in the world' from the first. But in the fullness of time the Logos 'became flesh and tabernacled among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of a unique Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.' The Incarnation was the revelation of eternal truth. It altered nothing in the counsels of God, but by means of a supreme dramatic or sacramental representation, it brought those counsels into the sphere of human knowledge and activity. In this way a new chapter in human history was opened; a light was kindled which should never be put out. His task achieved, He who was incarnated as Jesus returned to the position which He had held as the Logos before the Incarnation. There was and could be no accession of dignity to a divine Being as the result of anything done by Him in time. He received, in His own words, 'the glory which I had with Thee before the world was'; nothing could be added to this or taken from it. But the revelation to men was strictly relative to their power of receiving it. After His departure from the earth, His representative, the Paraclete, who is really Himself under another mode, undertakes the education of mankind, teaching them by degrees many things which they 'could not bear' earlier, and initiating them into the true significance of the historical ministry. If the idea of a progressive revelation had ever been so clearly stated before the Evangelist wrote, I know not where to find it. He gives us the message of the glorified and indwelling Spirit-Christ to the third generation of Christians, and he throws it back to the time of the earthly ministry. In this way he binds closely together the Christ of history and the Christ of experience; and the testimony of the Christian consciousness is that he has done no violence to history by so doing. The book does not pretend to be a biographical document in our sense; but it brings out with incomparable penetration what the Person of Christ, His example, and His teaching were to mean to humanity. He lifts the historical Figure above the shackles of the local, temporal, and accidental, and exhibits Him in His permanent significance. But at the same time he makes it impossible ever to separate Jesus of Nazareth from the Pneuma-Christos. The work of the Spirit was to be for all time continuous with and explanatory of what the first disciples had seen and heard in Galilee.

In form, no doubt, the promise of education in divine knowledge was made only to individuals. Christ does not say that the Church in the future would be better instructed than the Apostles themselves. But we must remember the date at which the Gospel was written, and the evident intention of the Evangelist to communicate teaching which he believed himself to have received from the Pneuma-Christos, but which was not derived from any documents or from oral tradition. This claim amounts in principle to a belief in progressive revelation through the Spirit-Christ. I think we are justified in saying that the Johannine Christology enables us to place a real Incarnation in the frame-work of history, and of history not necessarily regarded as the short story of a derelict world visited at intervals by catastrophic supernatural interventions.

Does this Johannine treatment of the Incarnation give us any guidance as to our attitude towards history in general? I think it does, in the following way.

The Incarnation is the supreme justification for a sacramental view of life. It is useless to ask why the world of space and time was created. Such knowledge is not for us. But we are to take account of the fact that such a world exists. The eternal and unchangeable thoughts of God are objectified as a system of vital laws and finite purposes, which need both time and place for their development. I am content to be frankly agnostic as to whether the whole cosmic process can be subsumed under a single unitary plan. If the universe is perpetual, as its Creator is eternal, there can hardly be any single purpose in it, since a purpose which is not eternally frustrate must have a beginning and an end. It seems on the whole more probable that all the purposes of God in creation are finite and limited, though they are worked out in an unending succession. There are wheels within wheels; some purposes have their fulfilment in a very short time; others are co-terminous with the duration of a single human life; others relate to the whole national life of a great people. But the principle is the same throughout. Every spiritual force proceeding from the mind of God must take the form of a willed process, realising itself in time against opposition. Even the redemption of mankind could not be effected without the Incarnation and Passion of the Divine Being through whose agency the world was called into existence.

Keats called the world 'the vale of soul-making.' It is a sphere of being in which the perfect can never be fully realized, since its whole *raison d'être* is to be a scene of unending conflict. But for us, as actors on the stage of the Creation, there is the obligation to translate into act every inspiration which comes to us from the spiritual world. Every vision must inspire a task. Every noble thought, every prayer, every generous impulse to self-denial and self-sacrifice, is incomplete until it has taken shape as an act of will. The reality of the world we live in consists in furnishing the necessary conditions for the realization of the absolute values in an infinite variety of ways. Inasmuch as the realization of purposes requires time, and sometimes, it seems, a very long time, history has for us a high degree of relative reality and importance. But historical events, as such, are not important for themselves. Their meaning is preserved in the eternal world, for, as great thinkers have said, 'Nothing that truly *is* can ever perish'; but temporal happenings are nothing out of relation to their eternal background, in which they have both their source and their consummation. We ourselves are immortal spirits on our probation. We have each of us our appointed task—one living stone to bring to the temple of God, one little contribution to make to the historical process of our country and of the human race. The stage on which we act, the tools which we use, the visible structures which we help to erect, must all ultimately be swept away. But we know that though this earthly tabernacle be dissolved, we have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. There, we must believe, all spirits, with what is significant and real in their life's work, live for ever in the presence of their Creator; live no longer separated, except by differences of character, but still distinct, still as having filled a particular place in the great pageant of history, still as being a part of one among the definite purposes of God. With this thought in our minds, we shall live in time, but not for time. We shall see without sorrow the passing away of what must pass away, as Time hurls the products of Time into nothingness; and our ambition will be not to raise some monument to ourselves 'more durable than brass,' but to be able to say as we lay down our burden, 'I have finished the work that thou gavest me to do.'

IS A SCIENCE OF HISTORY POSSIBLE?

By G. G. COULTON, M.A., D.Litt., Fellow of St. John's College,
Cambridge.

IN the address which we heard last night, and of which every word commanded attention, three points were raised which seem so important that I must begin by dealing briefly with them this morning, lest you should feel that I am shirking the difficulties of my subject.

(1) The question of time and space. I know very well that these may be merely modes of thought; but to me, unread in higher philosophy, they are necessary modes of thought; and I shall make myself more intelligible, and perhaps even get nearer to the truth after a rough fashion, by assuming, as we all assume in ordinary speech, the reality of time and space.

(2) The inheritance of acquired characteristics. Here I confess myself among the meliorists who hope that scientists may be mistaken when they speak of the thing as impossible; and that it may only amount to this, that science, with her present tools and methods, has not yet found any trace of such inheritance. But, after all, this question is not essential to my paper; for, if acquired characteristics are not inherited, certainly acquired experience is. Man's mind, like his body, has the power of assimilating nourishment and eliminating waste matter; therefore, in the most real sense, there is an eternal spirit which breathes from man to man, from generation to generation, and which (even though there were no other immortality) would give significance and dignity to all honest thought and to every strenuous endeavour.

(3) The question whether certain betterments in the world make us better Christians is rather philosophical than historical. In one sense, they cannot; for all times the Christian is a finite creature in face of an infinite duty—love God with all thine heart—love thy neighbour as thyself—so that, to the last, we are unprofitable servants. But part of love to one's neighbour is to avoid killing him; yet history can prove with certainty that manslaughter is far less frequent now than sixty years ago, and

that there is more general respect for human life; should we not, therefore, reckon this and similar improvements definitely on the good side, without enquiring farther? With this preface, I come at once to the main thread of my paper.

In the broader sense of the word, the sense in which *science* is contrasted with *nescience*, no man denies this title to History. The insatiable curiosity which we feel in the men and women of our daily lives extends also to others whom we have never known and never shall know by face; we read of their deeds and their words in the conviction that, by such reading, we advance ever so little beyond the zero of absolute nescience. But evidently those who chose the title of this present paper intended to raise the question of History's claim to that narrower sense of *science* in which we commonly contrast the 'sciences' with the 'arts.'

How, then, are we to define science in that restricted sense? Let us take that of Mr. Dampier Whetham :¹

'Science, in its broadest sense, is synonymous with learning and knowledge generally; or, in a more restricted sense, with ordered knowledge of natural phenomena and of the relations between them.'

It will be convenient to work upon this brief definition; and let me show my hand at once. I contend that History is capable of presenting us with an ordered knowledge not only of phenomena, but also of the relation between them. Moreover, I would add that this has always been the aim of the greatest historians, however sadly many writers of history may have sinned against the light. And in support of this I may quote from two great scholars who might seem to have lain under special temptations to the contrary—the Roman Catholic bishop Bossuet and the monk Mabillon. Each of these men speaks of his task in terms which might be endorsed by the severest scientist. Bossuet declared that :

'The worst of all intellectual failings is that of believing that things are, just because we should wish them to be.'

And Mabillon defines it as his own duty

'To proclaim certainties as certain, falsehoods as false, and uncertainties as dubious.'

It will be admitted that these two sentences do at least afford *prima facie* justification for the claim that historical methods and

¹ *Encyc. Brit.*, 11th ed., xxiv, 396 (article *Science*).

historical results differ not in kind from those of science, but only in degree. And my argument may be reinforced from one of the driest and most scientific writers who ever produced first-rate historical work in Britain, Thomas Madox, who wrote two hundred years ago :

‘In truth, writing of history is some sort of religious act. It imports solemnity and sacredness, and ought to be undertaken with purity and rectitude of mind.’²

In degree, history and ‘science’ do indeed differ, as the sciences do also differ among themselves; some, in the nature of the case, are more exact than others. We may say roughly, perhaps, that sciences become uncertain in proportion to their direct applicability to human life. The motion of bodies in a vacuum is comparatively easy to work out; but the complete vacuum is no factor in our daily lives. Motion as complicated by wind and weather, and by the attraction of other bodies, is far more difficult to calculate exactly; and, if the human element comes in as a further complication, the solution will be still more uncertain. Yet the same methods of enquiry hold good in all those problems; and it is only a difference of degree which stands between our most abstract calculation *in vacuo* and our calculation as to how far a certain golfer will drive a certain ball upon a certain day. Strict scientific method is simply the strict application of common sense to the subject in hand; and so, also, of strict historical method. In just the same way as one man deals with this problem of the golf-ball, another will deal with one of the most exciting of historical problems: How long is the machine called ‘Dictatorship of the Proletariat’ likely to run in Russia before it breaks down? And, if it breaks down, how and where will the failure come? True, that problem is far less soluble than those others I mentioned; but my point is that we have here only a difference of degree, and that history, like physics, is a science, a struggle for ‘the ordered knowledge of phenomena and of the relations between them.’

The two main objections that are made against this contention seem to be themselves unscientific, as resting upon imperfect observation of facts or upon false inferences. One is, that History is too warped by human prejudices to count as a

² *Hist. of Exchequer*, 1711. p. III.

science; the other, that it cannot repeat its experiments, whereas such repetition is essential to science.

The first of these objections acquires some support from many historians themselves, whose confusion of thought on this subject transpired occasionally at a recent International Congress, where one subject of debate was the question of Bias in History. Historians themselves too often use the word *impartial* where logic would seem to require a very different term, *judicial*. I say very different, because a moment's reflection will tell us that it is not a judge's duty, at the crucial moment, to be impartial; on the contrary, the very notion of judgment excludes impartiality in the sense in which that word is often used. He should be impartial, indeed, before he enters the court; but then he must struggle, as the case proceeds, to take a side in accordance with the evidence and the pleadings. He may end with a passionate conviction that *A* is in the right, and *B* in the wrong; but the very passion of this final conviction may be kindled by his consciousness of having sought it by strictly scientific methods. Moreover, there are certain things which a good judge will have pre-judged before ever he comes into court. He believes certain things already, on the ground of study or experience—important things, fundamental things—and from those he is bound to argue in his own mind. Those who tell us to approach every historical problem with a perfectly open mind seem scarcely to realize the implications of their own words. The most detached scientist cannot have a perfectly open mind. Does anybody now believe, what it was possible for a man like Tyndall to believe sixty years ago, that we can arrive at certainties about the physical world without either thoughtfully deciding, or thoughtlessly begging, some of the most difficult questions in metaphysics? The scientist must embark upon his work with some prejudgment, if only the prejudgment that this game will be worth the candle. At almost every step his imagination must outrun his observations; he must frame working theories, or his collection of facts will be aimless and useless. Between him and the historian, it is only a question of degree.

Let us turn to the second objection. It amounts to this: that the historian, however closely he may follow Bossuet's and

Mabillon's advice, can never attain to results worth calling *scientific*; since, when he has collected his facts, put them in order, and worked out their relation to each other in his own mind, this may not be their true relation; he cannot go into a laboratory and convince himself, by repeated experiment, that cause and effect stand to each other in the exact relation which he surmises. That is true; but it is true also of other studies which are universally labelled as scientific—of geology, for example. No man can command the earth's crust to do again what we now feel quite sure she once did.

‘There, where the long street roars, hath been
The silence of the central sea. . . .
They melt like mists, the solid lands;
Like clouds they shape themselves and go.’

Ruskin, after elaborate observations, convinced himself, paradoxically, that no river can cut its channel through rock, and that the river's function has always been to silt such channels up; nobody has ever been able to disprove that paradox by real experiment, though very likely nobody believes it. Geology, in short, is strictly history; the history of terrestrial transformations. Astronomy, again, is not always to be controlled by experiment; and, the more we reflect, the more clearly we shall see that the weaknesses which beset history are shared, to a greater or less degree, by other sciences. We admit them, but they do not prostrate us, for, as Christians, we live by that most Christian word, ‘God's strength is made perfect in weakness’; the past heroes of the faith ‘out of weakness, were made strong.’ To know our weakness is the first step towards conquering it. We know that we are tempted here in history, more than in geology, to believe that things are because we would wish them to be; we see that others err by proclaiming as certainties not only things dubious but sometimes things false; and we are not Pharisaical enough, let it be hoped, to believe ourselves immune from these temptations. But here again, we believe that God ‘will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape,’ and that we are something more than puppets in the hands of fate. We know that, if we apply our whole reason to these problems of the past, in the sense in which I always understood Rashdall to use that word ‘reason,’ of the totality of faculties and energies

through which men seek the truth in their daily lives—I say that if we apply all our reason to the problem, then we shall inherit, each in his own measure, the fulfilment of Christ's promise: 'Seek, and ye shall find.'

Nor is that the only word of Christ which may inspire us here. To the disciples of John the Baptist who asked: 'Art thou he that should come?' He prescribed the historical method. He prescribed it to all of us, again, as the one sure criterion between rival claims in religion: 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' For in both these cases the evidence to which Christ appealed was already historical evidence; this was an appeal to time already past, and indications which date from only a few days ago, or a few minutes ago, may be as perplexing to read in their full truth as a document of distant centuries.

Ought not, then, the elements of Christian history to be familiar to all Christians? And are not some of our worst misunderstandings due to the fact that this history has seldom been treated, in its entirety, with the scientific care of which it is susceptible? A false feeling of reverence has too often kept men from facing the possible falsity of things which they would wish to be true, or from acknowledging, even to themselves, that uncertainties are, after all, dubious, and that no artifice can remove this flaw of dubiety so long as nobody has established a reasonable certainty. We cannot too often remind ourselves, until the words have become so familiar that they are no longer needed, of what Newman wrote just as he was quitting the Anglican Church for ever. His words ran:

'It is melancholy to say it, but the chief, perhaps the only, English writer who has any claim to be considered as an ecclesiastical historian, is the infidel Gibbon.'³

Think of those words in connexion with three incidents which emerged in this recent Prayer Book controversy. Not only a bishop, but one of those who might be most expected to know these matters, claimed in *The Times* that Reservation 'is, in every true sense of the word, a Catholic custom' (Feb. 4, 1928); yet we have no trustworthy evidence for this as *a custom*, in the only sense which was really at issue in that discussion, for more than a thousand years after Christ's death. Another bishop, a

³ *Essay on Development*, 1845. Introd. p. 5.

specialist in history, confessed with honourable frankness that the question of fasting communion, to which he was personally attached, needed serious investigation now. And an equally strong Anglo-Catholic, professor of theology at a great university, has made an equally frank suggestion as to the need of formally reconsidering now, in the light of history, questions even more important than this of fasting communion. That is where we stand, then, after so many centuries of partial study; the harvest is always there, but where have the labourers been? Here again I am reminded of Rashdall, and of his most impressive sermon before Cambridge University on the dangers of an ignorant clergy, however well-meaning they may be in other ways.

No Modernist can afford to risk this danger of ignorance; if we teachers have not some real salt of book-knowledge, where-with shall we be seasoned? The effort need not be violent, but it must be real; the busiest curate must find a little daily corner for reading, and in what I am here about to say I look back clearly upon this same problem as it lay before me forty-five years ago—the problem of reading after a day's hard work. It is enough, for those who have least leisure, to read steadily at one good book, noting on the margin each successive day of the month as we travel through it, and thinking it over at odd times between the actual reading. And, for this purpose, it would be difficult to choose a better book than St. Augustine's *City of God*, which is fairly easily obtainable in a modern reprint of the seventeenth century translation, and which yields to very few other books in length and breadth and depth of influence. It has been called, and I think truly, the first attempt in all literature to formulate a philosophy of history. And we may say of it what Coleridge said of Jeremy Taylor: it is specially valuable to the young student in virtue not only of its merits but of its defects; not only for the truths which he will suck from it, but for the snares which he will learn to avoid; it satisfies him with historical food, and forces him into historical criticism. It is difficult to say that this latter consideration is less weighty than the former. May we not say of the real historical student, as of the real Christian, that in both cases it is rather a question of attitude than of result; not so much 'What things has he studied

or observed?' as 'How has he studied and observed them?' In the *Discours de la Méthode* of Descartes, the founder of modern philosophy, there is a gospel very nearly resembling, for our present purpose, the gospel of Christ's 'Seek, and ye shall find.'

'Seek, and ye shall find.' 'The main requisite for getting at the truth' (says Descartes in effect) 'is the *wish* to get at it; and the man whom we judge to be poorly endowed by nature, if he really wills success, will get nearer to the root of the most difficult matter than a man of ten times his brain-power but lacking his will.'

In that *City of God*, then, we may trace one continuous thread of eternal truth—that this is a rational universe, and that reason (in the widest sense of that word) will bring us into harmony with it. The book is mystical in the sense in which McTaggart defined mysticism: 'It asserts a greater unity in the universe than that which is recognized in ordinary experience, or in science; . . . and also that it is possible to be conscious of this unity in some manner which brings the knower into closer and more direct relation with what is known than in ordinary discursive thought.' To Augustine, history weaves one of the garments by which we see God. And he emphasizes, all along, a truth which has been reinforced and deepened by centuries of succeeding history, in spite of all the faults and follies of other Christians and ourselves—the truth that this belief in a crucified carpenter has taken more men out of themselves, and taken them farther out of themselves, than any other event in the records of the human race. Augustine feels, and he makes us feel, how the loftiest success may be born from what seemed the completest failure. And he makes us feel the greatness not only of individual Christianity, but of corporate Christianity. What had converted him was far less any intellectual force than the attraction of St. Ambrose and of the organized Church. In St. Ambrose he found a man who incarnated the best qualities of ancient Rome; and, in the Church at Milan, he found the incarnation of those qualities which had made Roman imperialism mistress of the world. All this he makes us feel as we read his book.

On the other hand, he arouses healthy scepticism. We note from the first what wild licence he allows himself, after the fashion of his age, in the interpretation of Scripture. We are

disconcerted by the way in which undeniable facts are utilized indiscriminately with the grossest fictions, and sometimes even by his claim to have verified those fictions.⁴ And while, on the one hand, we are elevated by his conception of the Church as the ideal City of God, on the other hand we resent his frequent confusion (it might almost be said his wilful confusion) between the ideal Church, known to God alone, and the visible institutional Church, containing so many members of whom Christ will say at the last day, 'I know you not.' We wonder how, if indeed the Church can proclaim so surely and so definitely the mind of Christ, there should have been no recognized authority to decide that crucial question, debated for a century and a half before Augustine's own time, 'Is heretical baptism valid or not? Has a person baptized by a heretic taken even the first step leading away from hell? Has he even crossed the threshold of the City of God?' And, lastly, we notice that nearly half of this fairly bulky book is frankly controversial; that the Saint works with sword in one hand and trowel in the other; and that he cannot even lay the foundations of his City of God until he has demolished that City of Cain which had encumbered the holy site.

All of this, and more, any reader will find in the book. But that brings me to one last consideration: How about moral judgments in history? Do we degrade history from its pinnacle of science by striving at every point to make ethical distinctions; by saying to ourselves and to others, 'That thing was good; that other thing was bad'? Let me quote here from one of the most impartial, as he was quite the most learned, of British historians who have lived in our time. In his inaugural lecture at Cambridge, Lord Acton said:

'The weight of opinion is against me when I exhort you never to debase the moral currency or to lower the standard of rectitude, but to try others by the final maxim that governs your own lives, and to suffer no man and no cause to escape the undying penalty which history has the power to inflict on wrong.'

St. Augustine does indeed often fall below what we require from a perfect historian; but it is not his ethical tendencies that drag him down. Sir William Bragg's recent address before the

⁴ *e.g.* That peacock's flesh is incorruptible, which he himself has proved by experiment, and from which he can deduce the Omnipotence of God (Bk. xxi, chs. 4, 7).

British Association may give us the greatest encouragement here.

‘Science,’ he said, ‘is not setting forth to destroy the soul of the nation, but to keep body and soul together.’

And again :

‘No clear line can be drawn between pure science and applied science . . . either loses virtue if dissociated from the other.’

If this be true, if science be not less itself, but more truly itself, for being applied to benefit the human race, what more beneficial purpose can it serve than to reinforce ethics? This comes out still more strongly in Sir William’s concluding words, which will perhaps be even more welcome to the many who have heard or read them than to the few who now hear them for the first time :

‘Long ago it was said, in terms which in their comprehensiveness include all the aspirations of the searcher after knowledge : “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength” ; and “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” In the old story every listener, from whatever country he came—Parthians and Medes, Cretans and Arabians—heard the message in his own tongue. A great saying speaks to every man in the language which he understands. To the student of science the words mean that he is to put his whole heart into his work, believing that in some way which he cannot fully comprehend it is all worth while, and that every straining to understand his surroundings is right and good : and, further, that in that way he can learn to be of use to his fellow-men.’

Here, then, is strong and welcome support for those who believe that we cannot get the most scientific result out of history except by the strenuous exercise of every human faculty ; that our reading must be not only an intellectual but also an ethical process ; and that from all history, secular as well as ecclesiastical, we may truly draw much the same moral as Augustine drew. In a very real sense, Christ reigns — *Christus regnat, Christus imperat*. In a real sense, man’s will can force success from the jaws of failure. As Dean Inge told us last night, in the Johanne conception of Christianity, ‘the revelation to men is strictly relative to their power of receiving it . . . we are immortal spirits on our probation.’ And, in a real sense, we may sum up all human records in those words from the Epistle to the Hebrews with which St. Augustine ends : ‘There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God.’

IS A PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY POSSIBLE?

By Professor A. S. PRINGLE-PATTISON, LL.D., D.C.L., F.B.A.

I SHALL begin by stating what I consider to be the nature of the philosophy of history, and we shall then proceed to some historical verification.

The essential feature of the philosophy of history seems to me to be the attempt to envisage the history of mankind as a single whole, and to exhibit, so far as discernible, some plan or purpose, some 'end' of intrinsic value, seen to be increasingly realized when the sequence of events is contemplated as a whole. Or, to be more correct, since in a time sequence there is no absolute whole, and we ourselves stand in the midst of things, a philosophy of history might be defined as the attempt to discern such a purpose and consummation.

A philosophy of history in this sense would appear to form an integral part of any constructive or systematic theory of the world. An idealistic philosophy, at any rate—any philosophy, that is to say, which seeks, and professes to find, the ultimate explaining principle of the universe in reason, mind, spirit, or God—seems almost fatally defective if it cannot trace the presence of that informing wisdom in the human record. 'Can we suppose,' says Augustine, 'that the order and purposiveness which men have so long admired in nature, is not to be found in history also, if we will look for it? God who in the physical world does everything according to number, measure and weight—Who has not left the entrails of the smallest and meanest animal, the feather of a bird, the little flower of a plant or the leaf of a tree, without its harmony and, as it were, a mutual peace among all its parts—cannot have left the course of human affairs, the growth and decay of nations, their victories and defeats, unregulated by the laws of His providence.' *God in History* is in point of fact the title of a representative nineteenth century work devoted to this topic.

We do not find much resembling such a philosophy in classical times. Philosophy of history will hardly come into being

without a belief that the process of events is working out some important and desirable result. But classical antiquity is, in this respect, prevailingly pessimistic. From Hesiod downwards, Greek and Roman theories of the successive Ages of the World represent the process as one of ever-increasing degeneration. The Hebrews looked forward to a Golden Age in the future as a consummation of their national history; for the Greeks it lay in the past. In the Golden Age, the fabled reign of Kronos, before Zeus thrust him from his seat, the earth brought forth her fruits spontaneously and the seasons were benign. War was unknown, and an innocent race lived of nature's abundance without the necessity of toil. But to the Golden Age succeeds the Silver, and to that the Age of Brass or Bronze. We ourselves live in the Iron Age, and, bad as things are, they still go from bad to worse. In Horace's well-known lines :

Aetas parentum, pejor avis, tulit
Nos nequiores, mox daturos
Progeniem vitiosiore.

The Epicureans alone entered a systematic protest against the accepted legend with its profoundly unhistorical picture of human origins, and in Lucretius one may read a very modern account of man's gradual emergence from the beastliness of primeval savagery. Yet he too tells us that the world is past its prime : 'the age is enfeebled and the earth exhausted by bearing'—'all things are gradually wasting away and passing to the grave, quite forspent by age and length of days.'

Apart from this traditional notion of deterioration, the favourite Greek conception of the course of things was the theory of cycles, based on the old doctrine of Babylonian astronomy, the great world-year, at the close of which the heavenly bodies return to the relative positions from which they started and the whole process begins anew. The cyclical theory appears already in Heraclitus. It is found in Plato's myths and is implied in some of Aristotle's statements. When the astronomical aspect is in the foreground, it is frequently insisted that the second cycle will repeat in the minutest particulars every incident of the first, and so on *ad infinitum*. According to the stock example, there will be another Socrates, son of Sophroniscus, who will marry another Xantippe, be impeached by the

same accusers, and drink again the fatal hemlock. When this weird exactitude of repetition is not definitely insisted on, the essential sameness of the successive ages still remains. Aristotle thinks, for example, that all arts, sciences and institutions have been discovered in the past, and lost again, an infinite number of times. A more profoundly discouraging idea can hardly be conceived. Prof. Bury points out how often Marcus Aurelius dwells on the eternal sameness of things with an accent of despondency. 'The rational soul,' he says, 'wanders round the whole world and through the encompassing void, and gazes into infinite time, and considers the periodic destructions and rebirths of the universe, and reflects that our posterity will see nothing new, and that our ancestors saw nothing greater than we have seen. A man of forty years, of the most moderate intelligence, may be said to have seen all that is past and all that is to come; so uniform is the world.'¹

It is not only that the cyclical idea is profoundly depressing. One may go further and say that there is for the human mind something essentially irrational in the idea of such endless repetition. And it is perhaps worth noting in this connection that Nietzsche, who was strangely fascinated by the doctrine of eternal recurrence, found its attraction precisely in the fact that it 'redeems men from their enslavement to ends, and demonstrates that there is no eternal Will that wills,—that one thing at least is impossible, rationality.' A time-world does seem to become an offence to reason unless there is something of value realized in the process, something gained, something which otherwise would not be. Philosophically considered, the idea of a time-world would seem to be essentially that of a unique or single succession of events conceived as such a teleological unity. Time, we may perhaps say, is only intelligible under the categories of progress and purpose. The conception of a succession of non-communicating cycles contradicts the very notion of time as a continuous series, just as the qualitative identity of the endlessly repeated cycles negates the idea of the purposive unity implied in progress. The prevalence of such a conception must, necessarily, therefore make a philosophy of history, as we understand the term, impossible. We have no

¹ *Meditations*, XI, 1. See Bury's *Idea of Progress*, p. 13.

difficulty in accepting the idea of endless repetition in the case of the ceaseless transformations of the physical universe — ‘worlds on worlds are rolling ever from creation to decay’ — a ceaseless process of building up and pulling down. But that is just because the redistribution of matter and motion (in Spencer’s phrase) is *in itself* strictly indifferent to reason. One configuration is in itself as good as another. Why, then, should we date these kaleidoscopic changes, or by what system of reference should we do so? Time is in a manner irrelevant in dealing with this subject-matter; and this is just what constitutes the distinction between the natural and the historical sciences. The historical sciences introduce the idea of time as a unique series of events in which an advance or progress is observable; and the philosophy of history presupposes the same conception.

The Jewish philosophy of history which Christianity inherited takes time in this sense. That philosophy was a product of the intense racial self-consciousness of the Jewish people in conjunction with the strenuous ethical monotheism of the Prophetic religion. Without the idea of a single supreme Will it is difficult to see how the conception of a single purpose realising itself in the course of world-history could suggest itself, or could be reasonably defended. On the other hand, the nature of that purpose, the path along which it is supposed to work, is manifestly conditioned by the tribalism in which Jewish religion had its roots. Although the favour of Jahveh is made more and more clearly to depend on ethical considerations, his purpose is still supposed to be primarily concerned with the destiny of his own folk. Hence even the most large-hearted of the Prophets conceive the fate of Israel as the determining factor in world-history. Seen from Palestine as a centre, the fate of the great neighbouring empires is conceived as mainly, if not entirely, dependent on the attitude assumed by them to the tiny Jewish state. The historical perspective in Egypt or Assyria, we may well suppose, must have been widely different; and the modern historian of these empires and civilizations must equally regard such a version of the facts as strangely out of focus. Nevertheless, just because of their geographical situation on the confines of three continents, with ancient civilizations on either flank and themselves necessarily involved in the struggles

of their mighty neighbours for world-supremacy, the Jews, it may at least be admitted, were in a specially favourable position for realizing the interdependence of different nations and their histories, and thus forming the conception of world-history as a single story or drama.

It is in the Prophets that we find the most characteristic expression of this Jewish philosophy of history, and, as I have just said, it is connected in the closest way with the monotheistic faith to which they had fought their way and in which they educated their countrymen. For these great preachers of national righteousness, although Israel remains a chosen people, the favour of Jahveh is not something to be counted on as assured by the natural kinship between the nation and its God: it is dependent altogether on personal and social righteousness. 'Seek good and not evil, that ye may live,' says Amos, the earliest of them, 'and so shall Jahveh of hosts be with you, as ye say.' And in another passage he scornfully repudiates any special claim for Israel on the ground of nationality. 'Did not I bring up Israel out of Egypt?' he imagines he hears the old nationalistic plea: yes, he answers, 'but the Philistines, no less, from Caphtor and the Syrians from Kir.' Thus in Amos already Jahveh comes instinctively to be thought of as the shaper of the whole world's destiny, the universal Providence who allots to each nation its place in the world and its mission in history. And when Isaiah in a well-known phrase speaks of Assyria as 'the rod of Jahveh's anger,' the unconscious instrument of his purpose for the punishment of his rebellious people, we have already, in set terms, the beginnings of a philosophy of history.

It is essential, if we are to understand Hebrew prophecy aright, to remember that in the prophetic announcements of a reign or kingdom of God to be established in the future, the reference is throughout to the terrestrial future of the Jewish nation (and the future of the neighbouring nations so far as that future is involved in the destiny predicted for the chosen people). Almost without exception the Prophets hold out the prospect of a happy end to Israel's troubles, conditional upon national repentance and a return to Jahveh. 'In that day,' says Isaiah, 'shall Israel be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth.' Actually situated at the

centre of the then known world, the position of Israel is to be central and dominant. The Philistines on the west, Edom, Moab and Ammon on the east, are to be brought into subjection, and 'the merchandise of Tyre is to be for them that dwell before Jahveh, to eat sufficiently and for durable clothing' (xxiii, 18). But the ascendancy of Israel is not envisaged as conquest and oppression after the Assyrian fashion: Israel is conceived, rather, as central in a community of nations who shall share with her in the knowledge of the true God. The philosophy of history is nationalistic but not ignobly so. Time passed, however, and the vision of political ascendancy faded away. The great prophet of the Exile looks for no more than local autonomy and religious freedom under the suzerainty of one of the great Empires which divided the world between them. He lays exclusive stress on the spiritual mission of Israel—Israel, Jahveh's righteous servant, 'the people in whose heart is my Law,' given 'for a light to the Gentiles,' to spread the knowledge of Jahveh and his righteousness to the uttermost ends of the world.

But in the sequel the savage attack upon their religious liberties by Antiochus Epiphanes in the middle of the second century B.C. inflamed the old exclusive spirit of race; and in the Apocalypses, which form so marked a feature of Palestinian literature in the two centuries which followed, the Gentiles appear for the most part as the enemies of God and the objects on which his vengeance is to be wreaked. The writers of these Apocalypses have surrendered all the prophetic hopes for the terrestrial future of the nation. They have ceased to hope for deliverance through any natural evolution of events or any human agency. The triumph of the righteous cause can come only through the direct intervention of God or of some supernatural Being clothed with his authority; and such intervention will mean the catastrophic end of what they call 'the present age'—the close of human history as it has hitherto existed on this planet. The Jews, or at least the pious core of the nation, are of course in the foreground as the representatives of the righteous cause; but the conflict assumes in these Apocalypses the dimensions of a cosmic drama. The imminently expected end is to be the culmination of an age-long struggle between supernatural forces of evil—revolted or fallen angels—and the forces of goodness. In this

transformation of the issue and in the pictures of the Last Judgment the influence of Zoroastrian conceptions on the original Jewish faith is clearly traceable. The most outstanding feature of the Judgment is the final overthrow and punishment of those supernatural powers of evil to whose malignant agency the Apocalypses commonly trace the deflected course of human history.

It was in this atmosphere that Christianity was born, and, as we all know, the New Testament writers outdo the Jewish Apocalypses in the ascendancy which they ascribe to Satan in the present world. St. Paul actually calls him 'the god of this world' (II *Cor.* iv, 4), and the title 'prince of this world' occurs three times in the Fourth Gospel. And besides 'the prince of the power of the air' himself (*Eph.* ii, 3), St. Paul knows many 'world-rulers of this darkness'—'the principalities, the powers, the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly regions' (*Eph.* vi, 12). The first generation of Christians lived in daily and hourly expectation of the apocalyptic consummation. St. Paul habitually assumes that the event will take place in the lifetime of those whom he is addressing: 'we shall not all die, but we shall all be changed.' But however intelligible it may have been in the circumstances of the time, this conviction of the immediately impending end of the world must be regarded from the standpoint of a philosophy of history as a counsel of despair. It is, in effect, a confession that the divine experiment of man's creation has proved a failure. What we usually mean by Providence is a divine guidance of human affairs, such as the Hebrew prophets believed they had discerned in the course of their national history. But the apocalyptic or catastrophic solution proceeds on the assumption that human affairs have entirely escaped from providential control: in the present world the powers of evil have definitively gained the mastery, and nothing remains but to close the record and to evacuate the small remnant of the faithful.

And yet, long after Christianity had made good its position as the official religion of the Empire, this remained the Christian theory. In the beginning of the fifth century A.D., we find Augustine in his *City of God* working out what is usually described as the first Christian philosophy of history on the same

dualistic and catastrophic lines. His reading of history is still based on the traditional apocalyptic contrast between two kingdoms, cities or communities—the *civitas dei*, the kingdom of God, and the *civitas terrena*, the earthly kingdom, or the kingdom of the devil. The origin of the two communities he traces back ultimately, as the Jewish apocalypses did, to the fall or revolt of certain angels; or, as far as mankind is concerned, to the fall of Adam, from which have issued ‘two kinds of men, two great communities—the one ruled by self-love and self-will, the other by the love of God and man; the one predestined to reign eternally with God, the other to suffer eternal punishment with the devil.’ The world was, according to Augustine, in the sixth and last period of its history, the period which began with the birth of Christ. The time still to elapse could not be precisely estimated, but as soon as the number of the elect has been completed, he says, a number known only to God, the present world will come to an end, and the Last Judgment will usher in the Sabbath rest of God and his people.

The importance of Augustine’s treatise is not to be denied. In the spirit of the passage which I quoted at the outset of this paper, he does make an attempt to represent the course of history as a single movement in which a definite purpose is realized. Yet how imperfectly is the idea apprehended! To him we owe the absurdly lopsided antithesis, which so long persisted, between sacred and profane history, the history of the Jews as the staple theme and the history of the rest of the world episodically introduced at convenient intervals. And what are we to think of a teleology which, in the words of an eminent theologian, ‘leaves the kingdom of the devil as not less enduring and more populous [vastly more populous, may we not say?] than the kingdom of God, so that the ultimate goal of history is for the majority of human souls one of eternal sin and suffering’?² How much more really dualistic is such a conclusion than the Zoroastrian vision of the end when a river of molten metal, flowing over the whole earth like a purifying stream, is to purge the wicked of their wickedness and usher in the universal reign of God. Augustine’s treatise may be a ‘plan of salvation’ for a favoured few, but it offers us no tenable philosophy of history

² Professor Flint in his *Philosophy of History*.

as we ordinarily understand the term. And as our President has reminded us in his opening address, 'the catastrophic, miraculous view of history which it embodies is wholly alien from modern ways of thinking.'

The fundamental defect of Augustine's treatise is, of course, that it leaves out of account the whole secular side of life. Art, science, literature, philosophy, invention and the arts of life—all that we commonly mean by civilization—is relegated to a single section of a single chapter in his twenty-second Book. He perpetuates in theory the abrupt dualism between the Church and the world—the apocalyptic or purely other-worldly attitude of early Christianity, which the Church was so soon forced to abandon in practice. There are those who assure us that this alone is genuine Christianity and that the history of Christian society is 'the history of a great evasion,'³ an insincere and unworthy compromise with a world whose social arrangements and principles of action have proved too strong for the faith of the gospel. But we have only to follow out such a contention to its logical consequences to recognize, not only its impracticability, but the essential perversity of the attitude which it commends. There is much, heaven knows, in what we call civilization that is a blot upon the earth and a disgrace to human kind—much both in its past history and in present conditions. But the fullest recognition of crying evils and patent defects need not blind us to the greatness and the wonder of the fabric reared by the nameless generations of the past. Think, for example, of the great system of law bequeathed to the modern world by Roman jurists working on centuries of national experience. The idea of an ordered civil polity and the example of a high public spirit were bequests so precious that Dante, reading Roman history as the development of the idea of Justice, came to see in that history the evolution of a providential purpose for man's secular life, as real and as clearly marked as the parallel development traceable in sacred history. The civic virtues of the secular state have their divine sanction as truly as the spiritual graces which are the pledge of man's higher destiny. As Dean Church put it,⁴ God 'has made man for this world, as

³ The phrase is Dean Church's, *Gifts of Civilisation*, p. 52.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 14.

well as intended him for another.' However true it may be that this life is a preparation for another, man has his part to play in this world under the natural conditions which govern life here. And it is only fair to recognize that this legitimation of the secular life, its reclamation from the kingdom of the devil, forms part of the authoritative teaching of the Catholic Church, since its exposition by Thomas Aquinas, though the old Augustinian view still tends to reappear and to colour popular theology, and in every generation men are born whose best hope for the world is that its end is at hand,

Impatient of the stars that keep their course
And make no pathway for the coming Judge.

This narrowly theological view remained largely in evidence throughout the Middle Ages. It was only after the Renaissance that the legitimation of the secular was firmly established. Bodin, whose book appeared in 1566, is usually mentioned as the first to give a sketch-map of universal history which is optimistic as to human progress and makes no reference to an end of the world. The Abbé de Saint Pierre, writing in 1757 on *The Continuous Progress of Universal Reason*, was the first to speak of the race as being still only 'in the infancy of human reason,' and to talk of its destinies a hundred thousand years ahead. And he thinks of progress as consisting of advance not merely in the physical sciences, but also in the sciences of ethics and politics, which are still more important, he holds, for the happiness of mankind. In thus linking the idea of progressive enlightenment with that of unlimited social improvement, the Abbé formulated in advance the characteristic creed of the leading French thinkers of the eighteenth century. Turgot, in two discourses delivered at the Sorbonne about the same time (1750), makes progress the distinctive characteristic of history, as contrasted with the cyclical changes of physical phenomena. And he conceived the progress of humanity comprehensively, not merely as advance in knowledge, but as 'the gradual elevation of man's nature as a whole, the enlightenment of his intelligence, the expansion and purification of his feelings, and the amelioration of his worldly lot. He seeks to prove from the whole history of the past that there has been such progress, and he professes his belief that there will be such progress in the future.'

In this modest empirical form, if we take long enough periods into consideration, I think we may probably all agree that the melioristic theory has much to say for itself. But, in such a statement, nothing is said of the relation of human progress to any divine purpose. Religion, and Christianity in particular, was by the French thinkers of the eighteenth century regarded mainly as superstition, and as having been the greatest obstacle to progress in the past. They regarded humanity, therefore, as progressing towards perfection in its own strength as soon as it had been delivered from that incubus. The 'perfectibility' of man became the favourite axiom of the century, and it continued to flourish during a great part of the nineteenth. The votaries of progress had, in fact, advanced to a much more questionable position than that of Turgot. They conceived of progress as operating with the necessity of a law of nature, carrying the species automatically, as it were, to its goal. 'Progress,' said Spencer, 'is not an accident but a necessity. It is certain that man must become perfect. The ultimate development of the ideal man is as certain as any conclusion in which we place the most implicit faith: for instance, that all men will die.'

But if these French and English philosophers have no place for God in their theory, other thinkers, like Hegel (who also looks on progress as necessary), identify, or appear to identify, the successive stages of this necessary advance in human history with the process of the divine life itself. The World-spirit, says Hegel in a well-known passage of the *Phaenomenology*, in which he looks back upon his own survey of the successive phases of human history, 'has had the patience to traverse these forms in the long stretch of time, and to take upon itself the prodigious labour of the world's history . . . because by nothing less could it attain to a consciousness of its own nature.' Hegel's term, the *Weltgeist*, is ambiguous, and his own personal position may be to some extent in doubt. He was too good a philosopher to take the time-process as the ultimate reality and to interpret that process as the gradual growth of something out of nothing. Many passages might be quoted in which he insists, in Aristotelian fashion, that what is last in order of time, the end of the process, is really first, because it is the

presupposition of the whole development. But there can be no doubt as to the position of many of his ablest followers, who frankly identified the Absolute with the process of human history. And as regards Hegel himself, the awkward fact remains that the end or goal reached in human history at the opening of the nineteenth century appears to be accepted by him as an exhaustive expression of the total nature of God. This is natural if we identify the Absolute with the subject underlying development, for in that case we are of course unable to rise higher than man's actual achievement at the time the philosopher wrote.

Hegel is in some respects an old story, but, as Dean Inge has reminded us, one of the most active philosophical movements of the present day, the New Idealism of Croce and Gentile, nourished chiefly on Hegel, whose influence in Italy has always been considerable, makes it its chief boast to have discarded the residuum of transcendency which it detects in his teaching. These thinkers would banish the very expression 'philosophy of history' on the ground that it perpetuates 'the transcendent conception of the real.' 'The philosophy of history is dead,' Croce assures us, and he proclaims instead, as the characteristic thesis of his own idealism, 'the identity of philosophy with history.' In Hegel's doctrine of the cunning or craft of Reason he sees 'the theological residuum' at the bottom of that philosopher's thought; 'it introduces a shadow of dualism and transcendency into the heart of the idealistic conception.' In such a mode of expression, 'individuals and Providence, or individuals and Reason, make not one but two, and the individual is represented as inferior and the Idea superior.' On the contrary, he says, 'in the philosophy which we have delineated, reality is affirmed to be Spirit, not such that it is above the world, but such as coincides with the world'; and the world in question is expressly identified with 'the spiritual drama of humanity.' The new Idealism, in short, treats 'the human and terrestrial as the sole reality.' Idealism, says Gentile, exalts the world into 'an eternal theogony, which is fulfilled in the inwardness of our being'; for this philosophy 'the finite thing is always the very reality of God.'⁵

⁵ Gentile, *Mind as Pure Act*, p. 277 (E.T.). The quotations from Croce are from the English translation of his *Historiography*.

Surely this view of 'the human and the earthly as the exclusive reality'—this deification of humanity and its progress—has only to be stated in order to condemn itself. The emphasis of Hegel's thought on the divine immanence and the knowability of the thus manifested God, as against the deistic idea of a far-off self-involved deity, a spirit, as he says, beyond the stars who eventually evaporates into the unknown and unknowable, belongs, I hold, to the great and true insights of his philosophy. 'God is not a spirit beyond the stars. He is Spirit in all spirits.' We do right, therefore, to seek God in our spiritual experience rather than in the immensities of the physical universe. But it is fundamentally absurd to suppose that the Power which cradles and encompasses all our lives is not itself a living fact, and that it is reserved for man to bring the Absolute, as it were, to the birth. Such a theory, as I have argued elsewhere, 'cabins the spirit of man within a narrow and self-sufficient positivism. It undermines the sentiment of reverence and dulls our sense of the infinite greatness and the infinite mystery of the world.'⁶

The explicit statement of such results is, I think you must feel, sufficient to discredit them. The sheer identification of the absolute Life with the course of human history would be absurd enough even if we still, as in ancient and mediaeval times, held this earth to be the centre of the universe; but that such views should be seriously put forward by thinkers fully cognisant of the Copernican revolution and the illimitable vistas of modern astronomy is indeed strange. It can only be explained, I think,—though not excused—as a reaction against the naturalism, sometimes deduced from the Copernican view, which would make man efface himself before the immensities of external nature, disparaging thereby the significance of his life as a rational being and a sharer therefore in the eternal values, which are the foundations of the world. Neither a true philosophy nor a reasonable religion can surrender this conviction of 'the essential greatness of man'—man a creature capable of seeking God, and therefore, as Grotius said, 'a creature most dear to God.' We may reasonably hold, then, that the evolution of mankind and the fashioning, by the manifold experiences of time, of spirits fitted to take their place in one great

⁶ *Two Lectures on Theism*, pp. 58, 59.

spiritual commonwealth cannot be a mere show or appearance for an eternally complete deity—cannot be indifferent to God himself, as if it were merely a pageant which passed before Him—but must rather be conceived as a process in which He bears a guiding part, a process whose results are truly an enrichment of His own life. But it seems to me that the theory of divine participation and direction can be usefully or safely applied only on the largest scale, when we are contemplating the process as a whole—the history of the earth, let us say, the emergence and evolution of animal life, the arrival of man's non-human ancestors and ultimately of man himself, and the shaping of the human animal in long periods of prehistoric time into a social and morally responsible being. In this age-long history a 'purpose of nature' (as Kant calls it) may be more securely traced than in the political and racial vicissitudes of the few thousand years which constitute all that we know of human history in the ordinary sense of the term.

We have seen how would-be philosophies of that history are inevitably coloured by nationalistic hopes and fears or racial ambitions, and how, when events have disproved a particular theory, a new philosophy is promptly produced to meet the altered situation. In this way the philosophy of history is continually being re-written by the last comer. After the shipwreck of Jewish nationalism, the Hebrew philosophy of history was re-edited by the early Christians, who claimed to be the true Israel, the peculiar people of God, to whom the Old Testament promises were transferred. The destiny of Rome formed the theme of the last great Greek historians. 'Fortune,' says Polybius (he uses the terms God, Fate and Fortune almost indifferently), 'has caused the whole world and its history to tend to one purpose, the empire of Rome'; and Virgil in the *Æneid*, with a deeper religious feeling, blends the glories of Rome's past with the thought of the measureless future of the Latin race, whose world-wide rule was to bring peace and ordered government to all mankind. Yet the mighty fabric was doomed to dissolution, and in Christian philosophies of history it appears but as part of a great *præparatio evangelica*—a divinely ordained medium for the propagation of the new faith. If we go further, the providential direction of history means one thing for the

Roman Church and quite another thing for the Churches of the Reformation. The Pope blesses the great Armada as it sets out to crush a heretic nation, but the medals of Elizabethan England struck to commemorate its destruction bear the words 'Afflavit Deus et dissipati sunt.' And in the following century, in one of his most famous sonnets, Milton identifies the Church of Rome with 'the Babylonian woe.' You will remember, too, the great passage of the *Areopagitica* in which Milton adjures the Lords and Commons of England to remember 'what nation it is whereof [they] are, and whereof [they] are the governors'—a nation 'chosen before any other, that out of her, as out of Sion, should be proclaimed and sounded forth the first tidings and trumpet of Reformation to all Europe.' 'Now once again,' he proceeds, 'God is decreeing to begin some new and great period in his Church, even to the reforming of Reformation itself. What does he then but reveal Himself to his servants and, as his manner is, first to his Englishmen.' Such language, I fear, is too reminiscent in our ears to-day of the Kaiser's references to 'the great Ally who never forsook the Germans.' 'Our Lord God would never have so striven for the German Fatherland if He had not meant great things for us. We are the salt of the earth.' He had the grace to add, 'but we must make ourselves worthy so to be.' The parallel, however, ought to make us chary of such detailed interpretations of the ways of Providence.

We do well also to remember that the most comprehensive of our philosophies of history leave much of the human record out of account. The Mediterranean Sea, as Hegel frankly says, is for them the centre of human history. So far as their story is concerned, the civilizations of India and China stand almost as much apart as if they had grown up on a different planet. Let us not, therefore, tie ourselves down too much to details either in our review of the past or in our forecast of the future. The span of human history is so insignificant compared with the ages that preceded it and the length of the future which science allows to the planet and its inhabitants that any inductions based upon it which would anticipate the course of that future are too precarious to inspire confidence. If, as men of science have of late often assured us, the race is as yet only in its infancy, it stands to reason that it doth not yet appear what we shall

be after ages to come : it is difficult to estimate the possibilities of progress in any of its directions. Of perfectibility, as proclaimed by the eighteenth century, it will be wiser not to speak ; and an automatic law of progress carrying the race irresistibly to its destined goal, as held by Herbert Spencer and others in the nineteenth century, we may confidently deny. Progress such as we contemplate can only be won by effort ; and if the effort be relaxed, a regression is only too easily initiated. It is certainly not the case, as seems to have been imagined by the nineteenth century apostles of progress, that every step taken is necessarily a step in advance. Survival, either of organisms or of ideas, does not mean superior excellence unless we take very long views. Progress on the whole is compatible with long periods of retrogression, such as may easily be pointed out in the past. Whether progress is to continue or not depends, therefore, ultimately on ourselves ; but in other respects a belief in its continuance is consonant, as Kant felt, with a theistic view of the world, and it is, he adds, the only belief which can give us courage and hope to face the future.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HISTORICAL ELEMENT FOR RELIGION

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WHEN, after I had promised to write a paper for this Conference on the Significance of the Historical Element for Religion, but before I had begun seriously to consider what I should say in it, there reached me in its final shape the printed programme of our proceedings, I perceived on its first page a paragraph, not in any way inspired by me, giving an 'intelligent anticipation' of the contents of my still uncomposed contribution to the discussion which it was proposed the Conference should undertake this year. It was not without some apprehension that I began to read this paragraph, since, not having been at all consulted, I feared that it might have committed me in advance to dealing with topics on which I had nothing to say, or to advancing views which I did not hold. I was, therefore, not a little relieved to find that instead of making my task more difficult it made it easier, by suggesting to me a line of thought which I was glad to follow, and which I might not otherwise have felt myself so sure that I was justified in selecting from among several which might have been covered by the thesis assigned to me.

I will, therefore, show my gratitude to the unknown composer of the paragraph by reading it to you at the outset as the text of my paper :

'The third paper,' so it runs, 'will deal with the Historical Element in various types of religion; *e.g.*, it might be contended that in the animistic religions there is no historical element, these religions being apotheoses of aspects of Nature. Again, that the ancient state-religions are apotheoses of political and social ideals and that the historical element enters into them in that form. In the founded religions history enters as the biography of the founder and the history of the primitive society; and an important aspect of these religions is that they are apotheoses of personality. Once more, mystical and philosophical religions might be held to be independent of any historical element.'

This, then, shall be my text, though I shall take leave, like Dean Gaisford in a well-known story, only partly to agree with it.

I do not myself consider that there is any religion in which there is no historical element; although, no doubt, there are religions in which it is more obvious and prominent than in others. For it is in religion that man endeavours to express his own attitude *to*, his own position *in* a Whole of reality, within which he and all with which he has to do, all which falls within his experience, is alike embraced. In religion he does not merely *apprehend* this Reality at the back of everything: he *feels* it as encompassing him on every side, as intimately present to himself and *haunting* him, so to say, even when alone as regards the company of his fellows. It is 'about his path and about his bed'; it 'spieth out all his ways.' And not only does he still *feel* it; he *acts* in such a way as to put himself, if he may, right with it. But religion, if its character be such as I have said, is, in philosophical phraseology, at once universal and particular; in other words it is *historical*.

For a form of experience may be properly called *historical* when it is neither merely particular, a matter of momentary feelings, such as a being might have who did not enjoy the human privilege of 'looking before and after,' nor merely universal, like a 'science,' which concerns itself with general laws and only considers individual things or events as particular instances of such laws; but involves a sense of the uniqueness of the individual thing or event in its relation to other things or events no less unique in a universe whose own unity is no less individual a unity than that of every real thing or event which has its being in it; whether, when we come to philosophize, we think of the unity which belongs to the whole as immanent only, or (with Professor Taylor in his brilliant 'Vindication of Religion' contributed to *Essays Catholic and Critical*) as imparted to its multitudinous constituents by their common relation to a transcendent Individuality such as we generally have in mind when we speak of *God*.

I venture to think that some definitions or descriptions of religion given by distinguished writers fail just because they disregard this union in it of the universal and the particular, which is, I believe, essential to its being what it is and which also justifies us in saying that it is always *historical*.

Durkheim and the French sociologists of whom he was the

leader are quite right in calling attention to the impossibility of understanding religion from a point of view which ignores the fact that many of the emotions and thoughts of individual beings are only intelligible in view of their inheritance from and their participation in a common social life. But they are, I think, mistaken in treating religion as in the end an *illusion* created in the individual mind by the powerful influence of social environment instead of acknowledging that there is in social experience a genuine revelation of the nature of Reality; and, on the other hand, that it is of the essence of religion to recognize what comes through social experience as the intimate concern of the individual soul. In startling contrast with Durkheim and his school, Professor Whitehead has described religion as 'what a man does with his solitariness.' He is no doubt calling attention to just that feature of religion which Durkheim and his school overlook, namely, that it is precisely in religion that a man most commonly first becomes aware of having a function peculiar to himself, a duty to be done, a soul to be saved, a personality of his own, unique, unshareable and irreplaceable. But the phrase which Professor Whitehead uses ignores in its turn a no less essential feature of religion, namely, its envisagement of this unique self as set against the background of an all-embracing Universe, or (to express it otherwise) in the presence of God known as the Judge of the whole earth, of our fellows as well as of ourselves.

Primitive religion is tribal; for when man first awakes to a consciousness of himself in relation to an encompassing Reality which is, to use the phrase which Professor Rudolf Otto has lately made familiar, 'quite other' than he, yet with which he is most intimately concerned, so that to propitiate it, render it friendly to himself, is a matter of the greatest moment—when he first awakes to this consciousness he finds himself a member of a group, and his first relations with the mysterious power or powers which impend over human life are mediated chiefly (though perhaps, even at a very early stage of development, not quite exclusively) through the group of which he is a member. Very soon there arises a 'mythology,' which, though not in our eyes a *true* history (and yet it may very often preserve genuine memories of real events and personages in the past of the tribe),

satisfies for the time being the demand for an historical element in religion. The 'aspects of Nature,' of which the writer of the forecast of my paper which I have taken for my text suggests that 'animistic religions'—the most primitive kind of religion that he seems to recognize—make into gods, may figure in this mythology; but they figure, as in the fanciful tales of children, as historical personages; not necessarily, indeed, imagined with any thoroughness or consistency in human form, but yet as playing their part in social intercourse with the ancestors of the tribe or of the animal species which constitute so interesting and important a part of the environment of humanity in the infancy of civilization. The sociological school to which I have already referred, of which the late Emile Durkheim was the founder, did a service to the study of religion in pressing upon the notice of scholars the evidence which exists that men first became interested in what we regard as topics of abstract science—in the measurement of time, the fixing of direction in space, and the like—in connexion with arrangements for accommodating the life of the tribe to seasonal changes or to its geographical situation.

The substitution for a purely tribal organization, usually through the subjugation of a number of tribes by more warlike neighbours commanded by some leader of military genius, of one to which we can apply the term 'political' is often accompanied by a progress in culture which, by facilitating the preservation of the records of the past, makes possible a better knowledge by the members of a 'political' group of events which have brought about its formation and of personages whose activities occasioned those events. The religion of such a group is not so much an apotheosis (as the printed prophecy of this paper has it) of social *ideals* as it is an apotheosis of the common spirit by sharing in which a social group is conscious of itself as a unity. The national deities who dwelt in the Temple of Jerusalem, the Acropolis of Athens, the Capitol of Rome were in each instance the spirit of the people which worshipped them, conceived as a permanent living centre of the national life, enduring through the lapse of the successive mortal generations which found their unity in relation to this centre. It was a matter of subordinate importance whether there was, as in certain monarchies, always

a visible personal embodiment of this spiritual unity in a divinely descended and divinely endowed king, whose function as incarnating the unity of the people or state passed on his decease or deposition to his successor, or whether there was attributed to the national god who had 'borne and carried his people all the days of old,' who 'was afflicted in their afflictions' and who triumphed in their victories, a separate existence of his own, apart from the mortal magistrates to whom his authority in the community might from time to time be delegated. It was the peculiar achievement of the prophets of Israel that they came, by recognizing in their national deity the 'God of all the nations of the earth,' whose choice of Israel for his own inheritance did *not* involve him in Israel's disasters (which were, indeed, to be regarded as consequences of his own just displeasure with his disloyal people), to effect a transition from the national or political type of religion to the universal without losing faith in God as a *historical* reality. The lack of this faith in the parallel development carried out in the Graeco-Roman world through the instrumentality of the Greek philosophers tended to a divorce of the highest religious thought from the practice of religion which went far to excuse St. Paul's assertion that the pagan 'world by wisdom knew not God.'

For, as the author of the anticipatory sketch of this paper goes on to suggest, in what may be called *philosophical* religion it is less easy to detect the historical element than in the national or political religions of which I have just been speaking. But it is to be observed in the first place that it is in fact usually on careful inspection to be detected there also; and in the second place that it is precisely the weakness of this kind of religion that, in consequence of its frequent failure to see God in history and its one-sided absorption in the universal nature or character of Reality in abstraction from its manifestation in historical individuals, it is apt to prove incapable of meeting the needs of human beings who in their own personal lives *are* such historical individuals and cannot find that adequate expression of their own true position in the real world which they rightly demand that their religion should supply in any system of thought, however spiritual and refined, for which their own individuality has no genuine significance.

Of *mystical* religion, which the writer of our programme links with *philosophical* religion as perhaps altogether lacking an historical element, I will speak again later on. At this stage I will confine myself to remarking that here, too, as in what has been called 'philosophical' religion, we shall on close inspection find the experiences of mystics, like the theories of philosophers, always conditioned, to a degree which, in view of the obvious mutual resemblance of such experiences among different peoples and under different creeds, one might not expect, by the historical circumstances of the individual mystic. I may perhaps afterwards have to suggest that a *purely* mystical religion, so far as it fails to supply the historical element necessary to a religion which is to be adequate to human needs, requires supplementation by something else.

But for the present I pass on to the type of religion next mentioned in my text, the 'founded' religion. The presence in such a religion of an historical element is even more obvious, and the part which it plays greater, than in a national or 'State' religion. But the importance attached to this element in different religions which may be classed as 'founded religions' varies very considerably. It is certainly at its maximum in Christianity, and there is nothing that will throw more light on the significance of history for religion than a careful examination of the reasons for the distinctiveness of Christianity in this regard. It will probably be best brought out by comparing and contrasting it in this respect with its two chief rivals as 'founded' religions, claiming to have a message, not for some particular sect or people or nation, but for the whole human race—with Buddhism and with Islam. As to the former, although undoubtedly Buddhism bears upon itself the stamp of its founder's personality, and would not be the great spiritual power which it has been and is but for the impulse originally imparted to his disciples by the life and character and preaching of Gautama and the influence exerted over thousands since his day by the story of his great renunciation and the tradition of his teaching, yet we cannot but observe that *uniqueness* is not claimed for him and for his mission in the same way in which it is claimed by Christians for the person and work of *their* founder. It is possible, indeed, to regard this as an advantage over Christianity

possessed by Buddhism; but it unquestionably diminishes the relative importance in Buddhism of the historical element in religion, an element which those who on this ground would give the preference to the Indian gospel over that which was first proclaimed in Palestine would almost certainly consider to be overstressed in Christianity. For, while in Christianity Jesus Christ is represented as the one and only incarnation of the one and only God, in whose appearing in the flesh his previous revelation of himself to man reached its culmination, and to whose Spirit, 'taking of his to show it unto' us, all subsequent revelation is attributed, in Buddhism (speaking generally, for there is more than one form of Buddhism) Gautama is one of a series of Buddhas, though the last up to the present time, who from age to age reveal again and again the true way of salvation; and is thus represented rather as an instance of a kind than as truly unique. The devotion of many Buddhists, indeed, is principally directed less towards him than towards Maitreya, the Bodhisatva or being on the way to Buddhahood who is believed to be his destined successor, in remarkable contrast with the traditional Christian anticipation of a 'second coming' of the one Author and Finisher of our faith. It is true, no doubt, that nowadays some Christians may feel this traditional Christian anticipation to be a feature of our religion which it is less easy for us than it was for our forefathers to accept without misgiving. But I am only at present so far concerned with it as to point out that it coheres with that recognition of the absolute uniqueness of the personality which expressed itself in the historical foundation of Christianity which makes the historical element of greater significance in our religion than in any other.

The other religion with which, as I said just now, we might profitably compare and contrast Christianity as regards the position assigned in it to the historical element is Mohammedanism. Mohammedanism approximates in this respect more closely to Christianity than does Buddhism. Belonging as it does in its origin to the same family of religions as Christianity, it is less affected than Buddhism by the tendency, characteristic of the whole Indian group to which Buddhism appertains, to treat the world of sense as illusion and to neglect history as a mere

phantasmagoria, or at the best a self-repeating cycle of masks under which the one unchanging Reality conceals rather than manifests itself from eternity to eternity. To Islam history is truly history—a single process, unique in itself and in each of its parts. Yet the significance of history is less in Mohammedanism than it is in Christianity, in that God remains, in transcendent majesty, outside of it. It is his messengers only that take part in it, and the supreme Prophet, Mohammed himself, is but the greatest of these messengers, in contrast with the central doctrine of Christianity that in Jesus the eternal Word, who was from the beginning was with God and was God, became flesh and dwelt among us. We may be led by philosophy to recognize that Reality is ever individual, the universal *in* the particular, and that we have not reached our destination as philosophical enquirers so long as for us any *other* particular might have illustrated the universal as well as *this* particular, or *this* particular as well exemplify any *other* universal as *this* universal. Nevertheless the actual vision of the unique and individual reality is often denied to us. But in the Christian religion we may see, though as in a glass darkly, yet with the assurance of faith, that actual presence of the eternal in the temporal, of the infinite in the finite, which alone transforms tradition and memory into history properly so called, and justifies the presence in all religion of an element which we may call historical because it bears witness to the inadequacy of any apprehension of our individual relationship to the eternal Reality that may fall short of realizing the uniqueness of every such relationship. Christianity is in the supreme degree a *historical* religion because it is in the supreme degree a religion of *individuality*.

It might seem perhaps at first sight that a particular faith would better earn the title of the religion of individuality by emphasizing the *mystical* rather than the *historical* element in religion. No doubt that which passes by the name of mystical experience is commonly characterized by a sinking of the mystic into himself, in which he becomes conscious of an immediate union with the one ultimate Reality, or at least of approximation to such an immediate union. The historical and social relations

which diversify and enrich his everyday life, but are also felt to interpose themselves between him and the one ultimate Reality, drop out of sight and leave him free

‘ Lonely to the Alone ’ to ‘ go,
Divine to the Divinity. ’

But I should not myself regard this kind of mystical experience, the importance of which as a factor in religious life I have no desire to disparage, as pre-eminently the realization, by him who enjoys it, of his own *individuality*. On the contrary, it is the very aim of the mystic's quest to lose the sense of an individuality which separates him, holds him apart from the One. The method by which he seeks to achieve that aim is the stripping off from his soul of those distinctive determinations which go to constitute him *this* unique historical individual. The fact, which has often been noticed, and to which I have already called attention in this paper, that mystics of all ages, countries and religions use such similar language is of a piece with this tendency in mysticism to ignore rather than to stress individuality. A purely mystical religion (if such a thing be possible) would not indeed lack an historical element, since, as I observed before, the historical antecedents and connexions of the mystic are never really altogether without effect in determining the form of his mystical experience; but it would be still only an imperfect religion were it unbalanced by the use of what the late Baron von Hügel contrasted with the *mystical* as the *institutional* element in religion. For it is through the use of this institutional element that the individual realizes the truth of his historical situation in the one universe of God; and apart from the use of it he is in danger of missing in the God with whom he is conscious of being made one that which this God reveals in that actual course of events which we call history.

I need only mention in illustration of what I have said the notorious tendency in mysticism, if unchecked by loyalty to a law or to a creed, to become divorced from morality, as well as the deliberate counteraction of this tendency by some great Christian mystics through insistence on the importance of not losing sight, in that concentration of attention on the divine unity to which mystics are prone, of the ‘ sacred humanity ’ of

Jesus Christ. For this sacred humanity stands in Christianity as the pledge that in and through history we may lay hold, not of something other than the one object of the mystic's passionate love, but his 'Presence and his very Self and Essence all divine.'

While, then, an historical element is, as I believe, present in every living religion, the recognition of a single historic process as the medium not merely of a divine revelation *to*, but of a divine Incarnation *for* and ultimately *in* humanity as a whole (since redeemed humanity is Christ's mystical body) is characteristic of the *Christian* religion. It is true that at first sight it might be objected that we have in Christianity the attribution of religious significance to a certain select portion of human history only, to the exclusion of all the rest. But on nearer consideration what is really secured by the emphasis laid on this select portion proves to be the recognition of the uniqueness of *every* part. It is as the centre of the whole that this part is chosen to be the point on which the light is thrown. No other would have done as well; for, just as these persons or events cannot take the place of any others (since there is in the end but *one* history), so no others can take the place of these. But from this *one* history no person and no event is dissociated or alien: rather, every one has its own unique place therein assigned to it by that Providence concerning which we have been told that the hairs of our head are all numbered and that not a sparrow falleth to the ground without our Father.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE HISTORICAL ELEMENT IN CHRISTIANITY

By Professor F. C. BURKITT, D.D., F.B.A.

AFTER hearing the learned and instructive discourses of yesterday, I begin to wonder whether what I have to say may not be quite out of place. I did not join in the discussions, partly because I have an opportunity now, but partly because I felt I was too much of an old-fashioned realist—or is the proper word empiricist?—to have any part in that battle of mental giants. I feel therefore constrained to begin by a sort of *Credo* or Profession. I really do believe in Time, at least for my processes of thought. If God is outside Time and beyond Time, well and good—He may be, but I am not. And so I cannot think anything about the timeless part of His Being, if such there be. Or if I do make statements on the subject, I do not know what I am talking about. For me and all my thoughts, even about God, Time is real, a curious co-ordinate, unlike space-co-ordinates, for it only goes one way.

Believing in Time, as I do, I also believe in the Course of Events—not Battles only or General Councils, but also the states of mind of past individuals, as well as their published speeches and writings. This Course of Events has shaped us, has brought us to where we are, whether we know it or whether we don't. The Science of History to me means knowing about past events: that is difficult enough, in all conscience. But the past events are there and we can't change them. They have made us. To ask that we shall be able to predict the future is like asking the scientist to have such a mastery of physics as to be able to change the laws of electricity. It is enough for the scientific electrician to find out the laws of electricity.

With such beliefs as these of mine, it appears to me that a Philosophy of History in the sense it was mostly used yesterday is not what we call science nowadays, but rather an Act of Faith. It is the giving of a substantial form to our desires, a proof of something which we do not see how to demonstrate.

But when I came to consider what is involved in the title assigned me to talk upon before this Conference it became increasingly clear that it is not at all an 'academical' or merely theoretical thesis, not a general question but a concrete one. For we are not gathered here as seekers after a religion, or as constructors of an ideal religion for the inhabitants of Mars. We are not even a Missionary Conference to consider how best to present Christianity to Bantus or Tibetans, persons ignorant of our religion altogether. We are, I suppose, in the first place a company of members of the Church of England met together to consider our own inherited religion in the light of modern knowledge and the ideas that have been born from that knowledge.

One most important effect of this modern knowledge has been to make a good deal of the methods and presuppositions of ancient controversy antiquated and out of date. The Church of England is by its very nature both Catholic and Reformed. I am not thinking of nice distinctions made in the Articles: I am thinking of the general trend of things. The Church of England is, in some sense, Catholic—Catholic in a sense that the other great Protestant bodies are not Catholic at all. Lutherans and Calvinists in the sixteenth century broke away altogether from the then immediate past. If in their New Model they retained this or that rite or office, it was because in their opinion the thing or office could be proved by sure warrant of Holy Scripture. The only exception was Holy Scripture itself, which they received mainly from tradition, there being at the time very little dispute among Christians about it. But the Church of England never broke in this way with the past. It does not, and never did, regard itself as a New Model, but as the Old Church, cleaned out indeed—perhaps one might say 'restored,'—but even a Church which has been spoilt by so-called restoration is an *old* Church, something different from a new building erected on the old site.

Further, from the point of view which I want to emphasise in this connexion, it is the intention rather than the success which has been attained that matters. Perhaps the most significant Anglican ceremony that has ever taken place was the consecration of Archbishop Parker: in that ceremony, as the Romans

rightly hold, it is the intention that in the last resort matters. And what was that intention? Obviously, to do all things as far as possible in conformity to the ancient order. Was Parker really consecrated? Did he really attain the mysterious grace of episcopal dignity? Strictly speaking, God alone knows. There is no test known to science which can distinguish a bishop from an ordinary man. Anglicans believe that Matthew Parker became a real bishop, while Romans are of the contrary opinion. But it is at least obvious that the Elizabethan authorities did their utmost, by word, by deed, by precaution, by intention, to bring Parker into the Episcopate, to make him not only one with Peter and Paul and the Christians of the first generation, but to make him the spiritual heir of Augustine and Lanfranc and Anselm and Langton. And in doing this the Church of England took upon itself a good many of the liabilities of the Old Catholicism. And on what is this Old Catholicism based? On tradition, yes; but also on Scripture. Every conclusion in St. Thomas Aquinas's *Summa* is nailed down with a text.

The Romans consider that the intention of consecrated and consecrators in Parker's case was faulty, inasmuch as their intention was rebellious against Rome, their proper head. This brings me to the second point, that the Church of England is Reformed. Here again many of the details do not matter. The break between Rome and Canterbury was made in the sixteenth century, and but for the revolution of the sixteenth century, the Protestant revolution, our breach with Rome would never have been made, or if made would have assumed a totally different character. The Church of England has borne, and continues to bear, the mark of the sixteenth century deeply imprinted on its formularies and its ways of thinking. As Catholics, English Churchmen are proud of their continuity with the past, but in the twentieth century the past includes continuity with the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as well as the Middle Ages. For three hundred years, from 1558 to the middle of the nineteenth century, English Churchmen were proud to call themselves Protestants, and they knew very well in a general way what they meant by the term. A Modern Churchman of his day, a friend of Archbishop Laud, William Chilling-

worth, expressed the pith of what was meant in his famous phrase, 'The Bible, the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants.' To the thorough Protestant the Bible was everything, the authority, the sole authority. Moreover, speaking generally, 'the Bible' meant to Protestants the obvious literal meaning, what it appeared to mean to the plain man. The Scriptures were the fulcrum, the rock, the base, upon which the Protestant position rested. In many details Protestant controversy was very successful: many a practice, many an axiom of religion as then commonly understood, was shown to be not only non-Biblical, but quite alien from the practice and beliefs of the writers of the New Testament. Not only Indulgences, but also Mariolatry, the worship of saints and relics, nay, the Papacy itself, are a very long way from the sort of customs and beliefs which can be elicited from the study of the earliest Christianity.

On these lines our fathers succeeded in freeing themselves from an alien spiritual tyranny. We cannot but be grateful, and we cannot but have respect for the dialectic which had power and authority to embolden them to reject the then universal and immemorial Constitution of Religion without losing Religion itself; nay even, in the case of the Church of England, without feeling that they had lost their birthright. But this freedom was bought at a price, and that price we are now paying.

Where now is their authority, the sure warrant of Holy Scripture? That which for a couple of generations has been apparent to 'intellectuals' and 'critics' and 'advanced' persons generally has in the last twenty years, and still more since the War, become obvious. From every quarter we hear of the decay of organized religion, of the slight hold that religion and the restraints of religion have upon the generation that is growing up, a generation which (as we shall do well to remember) is the first generation for centuries that has not been brought up upon the dogma that we have in the Bible an infallible guide to truth whether about science, or about history, or about conduct. In the recent controversy over the proposed new Prayer Book what I venture to think was quite obvious was that while on the one hand the strength of anti-Roman, anti-'Catholic,' sentiment in the country had been curiously underestimated by the majority

of the bishops and other persons in high position, on the other hand the voice of the opposition was notably inarticulate. What wonder, things being as they are? It was the voice of a majority unwilling to submit to a new yoke of ecclesiastical authority, but extremely hazy as to where true authority is to be found.

Let us go back again to the title of this paper, to the importance of the Historical Element in Christianity. It is set as if the opposite were arguable, and indeed I understand that I am to be followed by a paper which will minimize this alleged importance. What a change from what must have been said in any former generation, by any Christian since the days of Marcion and of Mani! And even these great heretics based their whole construction on 'Jesus who appeared in Judaea,' and what He had effected. Christianity is *not* the absolute religion, independent of time and place, as if 'Do as you would be done by' and a few other maxims were the core of the Christian religion. Christianity, from the first and all down the centuries, has been centred in what theologians call the Incarnation. There have been many theories, orthodox and heretical, about the nature of the Incarnation, theories of the nature of God, of the nature of man, of the nature of the God-man. But the essence of the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation is that in some way or other the Divine life and power and grace was personified in Jesus, that in Him that which is really Divine had a career among men, with all the necessary limitations that such an individual career involves. What these limitations were is a matter of serious dispute, but the very idea unquestionably involves limitation, circumscription, περιγραφή. 'Crucified under Pontius Pilate' says the official Christian Creed. What has Pontius Pilate to do with the definition of true religion? This, that he marks a place and a date. And if our theology go on, as Christian theology has always done in the past, to include some doctrine of an atonement, a fresh association of God and man, effected somehow by 'Jesus who appeared in Judaea'—to use Mani's phrase once again—then that also is dated and placed. But if Christianity is concerned with history, is in some way really dependent upon history, how far is it vital that the history shall be true? What is to happen if it be discovered, to use the

popular phrase, that 'the Bible isn't true'? That is the link between what I began with and what I have been saying in the last few paragraphs. On what is our Christianity based, if not on the Bible?

Let me begin by expressing my conviction that it is impossible to get what may be called a safe, a 'fool-proof,' religion. There is an element of doubt and uncertainty, of choice and venture, in religious faith, which is different from demonstration and proof. Further, in the special case before us we do, I think, get some help, at least in clearing our thoughts, from a distinction made by Professor Wobbermin of Breslau in a paper which he called *Geschichte und Historie*. He makes a difference between these two words, defining *Geschichte* as that which really has happened, what I have always tried to speak of as 'the Course of Events,' while by *Historie* he means the accounts, true and false, adequate and inadequate, which men have made of the Course of Events. Wobbermin's thesis was that Christianity does depend upon *Geschichte*, but that it does not depend on *Historie*. This does not take us very far, for how can we ascertain the outlines and contours of *Geschichte*, seeing that we have nothing but *Historie* to go upon? Still, I think the distinction helps to clear our thoughts, helps us to understand the nature of our dependence on past events.

And here, before we inquire further, let us ask ourselves two curious questions. The first is, supposing that as the result of current unbelief, assisted perhaps by some great catastrophe in human affairs, the Christian Faith died out for fifty years, for a couple of generations, could it ever be revived? Would reading the Bible recreate the Christian religion if there were no organization of Christians actually surviving which a man could join? The other question is, what is the minimum erudition of a Christian man? In former days this question tended to involve that other, with which it is not necessarily connected, *viz.*, what amount of Christian knowledge or doctrine is necessary to escape hell and attain salvation? We need not now trouble ourselves with that. But it is obvious that some ideas about God and man and Christ are necessary before a man's religion can be regarded as *Christian* religion. What are these? Can we define them? I am not attempting to answer these two

questions now, but I think the discussion of them belongs to our subject.

Let us remember in passing that there are indications that the second question is not an idle one in some parts of the mission-field. Of course, so long as the Bible throughout was regarded as absolutely true, as a revelation of absolute truth, it was obviously most important that every Christian should be instructed in the whole Bible. Let the Indian convert forget his heathen fables and learn the true story of the beginnings of things, of Adam and Eve, of Noah, of Abraham, of Jonah, of Daniel! But now that Noah and Adam and Eve are receding into the realm of folk-lore, cannot we, it is beginning to be asked, teach Christianity to Hindus on the basis of the Vedas and the Bhagavadgita, just as the Western Modernists are basing their Christianity on Jewish legends? In any case, what reason is there for teaching the Old Testament to those who do not know it, except on the supposition that it is an essential part of the truth of things?

The answer is not easy for any Modernist, but it is evident that no answer at all can be given except by one who has a fairly clear idea in his own mind as to the nature of the Christian religion. By the Christian religion I do not mean religion in general. There have been many deeply religious people who have not been Christians at all—Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus are obvious instances. But Christianity does seem to me to be bound up with certain alleged historical happenings.

What these are we will come to later. But it is obvious that if what I have said is true at all, it is of the first importance that the alleged happenings really occurred, that if they could be proved not to have happened Christianity would fall. On the other hand, it is equally obvious that if they did happen, nothing, not even the disbelief of subsequent generations, can prevent them having happened. If the Crucifixion of Jesus took place, present-day unbelief, even universal unbelief, cannot prevent its having taken place.

But belief in the Crucifixion is not all that is required of a Christian: to this must be added a belief about the Crucifixion. He that cometh to God must believe that He is,—and—that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. Both parts are

necessary.¹ However short or vague we may make the list of necessary facts to be known and believed in, there is a corresponding list of views to be held about those facts in order to convert our true historical opinion into articles of religious belief.

Thus, according to my view, historical criticism—the critical scientific study of history—can conceivably kill Christian belief or can allow it; it cannot produce it. Let us now go on to see to what extent it has, by its studies about the facts alleged by Christians, modified or hampered it. The ‘facts alleged by Christians’ cover a good many more things than find a place in the Creeds, and it is futile to deny that the old construction of the Christian Universe has been shattered. What is perhaps quite as important, no new construction has as yet taken its place.

The last great expounder of the Christian Universe was Pascal, who was also one of the first to feel the dark abysmal cold of a non-geocentric world. From the days of Pascal to the present time there has been an unbroken retreat, a tacit abandonment by Christian thinkers of province after province formerly dominated by Christian, that is to say Biblical, theory. This earth was once central; now it is regarded as a second-rate planet in a third-rate solar system. At the same time its age in time is not merely some five or six thousand years, as the Bible asserts, but some unascertainable period immensely longer. Man, again, is on the one hand regarded as a product of a long evolutionary process, not as a distinct species created perfect that presently fell from its high estate; on the other hand, the actual history of Man is much longer and more varied than is even hinted at in the *Book of Genesis*. Seventeen thousand years ago (more or less, but the error is not more than two thousand years either way) there were men in the south-west of France and the north of Spain who could draw coloured pictures of the animals they hunted and ate better and more life-like than the majority of us here can do, and men who chipped well-made flint tools lived in and about the district where Ipswich

¹ R. S. Conway has defined an Event as ‘a certain physical fact *plus* all the human feelings that led up to it, and all the human feelings that flowed from it’ (*Falernian Grapes*, Jan. 4, 1917).

now stands thirty thousand—some say seventy thousand, or more—years ago, before the Ice Age. Where do Adam and Eve come in, in this new edition of *Genesis*? Where and when are we to place the Fall and all that that alleged catastrophe involves?

Coming further down, it is not too much to say that the Egypt and Syria of the Tel-el-Amarna Letters is very different from the primitive society depicted in the Bible tales of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. With the later parts of Bible history it is of course different. We can now date both the capture of Samaria by the Assyrians and the capture of Nineveh by the enemies of the Assyrians with accuracy. Surprising documents from far up the Nile have thrown a curious side-light on the age of Nehemiah and Sanballat. What is more important for religion is that we are learning to see in the revolt of the Jews under the leadership of Judas Maccabaeus and his brothers, two centuries before the Crucifixion of Jesus, not a mere episode of secular history, but a first public manifestation in a crude political form of the great fact that the religion of the post-Exilic Jews had become in some respects a different thing from that of the nations around them, a sign of that incompatibility which in the end was to destroy the Jewish nation and yet to make one form of their religion into the dominating factor in the whole civilized world. But how different are all these considerations, all this presentation of what preceded the career of Jesus Christ, from the old way of regarding the Old Testament, shared by Catholic and Protestant alike! It is a new construction. We have taken away the first that we may establish the second.

It is not part of to-day's discussion to go deeply into the very controversial details of the historical criticism of the New Testament. If I were to define my own views about the Gospel History I should be found in some things too sceptical and revolutionary, in others too credulous and conservative, by many among you—I do not doubt it. But there is one view about the tale of Jesus, the Gospel Epic, which does directly concern the subject in hand, about which something may be said here, because it is a view which would destroy the vital root from which the historical element in Christianity derives its importance. The view which has found defenders in modern days that the

Gospel tale is altogether mythical is really new; it cannot be traced in ancient times. There is, to my mind, a real distinction between this modern heresy and the views of Mani and Marcion, and even those of the author of the *Acts of John*. I used just now a phrase, quoted by Ephraim Syrus from Mani, 'Jesus who appeared in Judaea.' This phrase is not so vague and commonplace as perhaps it sounds to us. Mani's religion, the religion of the Manichees, is so far away from Christian orthodoxy that many scholars have not reckoned it as a variety of the Christian religion at all: in my opinion, however, he is properly to be regarded as a Christian, though certainly a most heretical one. Mani not only rejected the Virgin Birth, he rejected any sort of human birth for Jesus altogether. His Jesus was wholly Divine, a manifestation of the pure Light-substance. Nevertheless he acknowledged that Jesus had 'appeared in Judaea.' He had had a career among men, and that career had been so effective that it had made an epoch in the fate of the human race.

In a very important review of Waldschmidt and Lentz' *Die Stellung Jesu im Manichäismus* (*Theologische Literaturzeitung*, 26 May, 1928), Prof. E. Peterson of Bonn gives reasons for holding that Jesus in the Manichaean system is neither the 'Second Emanation' nor the 'Messenger' of that system, neither *Ormuzd* nor *Srōsh*, and he adds:

'This leads to the important deduction that Jesus is neither the Primal Man nor the Eschatological Man in the Manichaean system. It is evident that thereby the importance of Jesus in Manichaeism is more limited than would be gathered from the work of Waldschmidt and Lentz.'

I venture to draw a different deduction. The Manichaean system, the theory of the Universe which Mani constructed out of various earlier cosmogonies, is a strange and bizarre fantasy, which nevertheless has some internal consistency, as is to be expected in the imagination of a single gifted individual. There is nothing historical in it; it is on the one hand mythological cosmogony, on the other an expression of Mani's conviction that this world is a Smudge, an unsatisfactory combination of the incompatible realities which he calls Light and Dark. In this world of his Jesus *is* a Stranger, an uninvited Guest. But He cannot be eliminated. Whatever His significance, however

strange and self-inconsistent a view Manichees may have had about the Jesus 'who appeared in Judaea,' they gave Him worship and adoration (see specimens in my *Religion of the Manichees*, p. 92 f.). He was an integral part of their religion. In other words, Jesus represents the historical element in the religion of the Manichees, as He does in orthodox Christianity, something given, not excogitated.

That is a totally different view from one which makes the alleged human career of Jesus an allegory or a myth, essentially untrue in its natural meaning while perhaps symbolizing eternal verities. The ancient Docetic heretics, such as the author of the *Acts of John*, believed that flesh and blood was essentially impure, and that only the soul and intellect was capable of salvation; Jesus, who had come from the Divine essence, was sent to redeem and free the soul and intellect, and did not in reality acquire a body but only in appearance: the true Gnostic understood this and viewed the Gospel history accordingly. But he did not deny that Jesus appeared to the crowd, to the rulers, to the crucifiers, as human; he did not deny that the career of Jesus, more or less as set down in the Church's official Gospels, was one of the phenomena of history. Docetism, in a word, is a theory about the meaning of the Gospel story, not a denial of it or even an allegorization of it. The outward appearance was to Docetic heretics a stumbling-block and foolishness, and they soothed their shocked feelings by a particular theory of what really took place under the appearance, but they did not deny the appearance itself. The distinction may appear to be fine, but it is essential. It is, in fact, a distinction of essence.

And what bearing, you may ask, has all this upon our question, what meaning has it for us to-day? I think a very real and tangible meaning. If we call ourselves Christian, no doubt Christ is central to our religion, but what are we to think of Christ? What does He mean to us? There are three ways we may think of Jesus Christ—as one who *was* this or that, as one who *did* this or that, as one who *taught* this or that.

No doubt the true and Catholic answer is that He is all three, and were Baron Friedrich von Hügel still with us I can imagine the force and fervour with which he would set forth the strength and stability of a view which was based on a due recog-

dition of all three elements of the truth. But I am concerned to-day rather to point out how much modern liberal opinion, especially modern popular liberal opinion, has exaggerated the importance of the teaching of Jesus to the overshadowing of His achievement and the inner force which alone—so we must believe—made this achievement possible.

Of course Jesus was a Teacher. Every man who inaugurates any movement must to a certain extent explain himself, must train his associates, must point to the goal and open up vistas. Jesus was called Rabbi by His immediate followers, and in later times the Jewish Rabbi was pre-eminently a teacher, though I am not convinced that in the first half of the first century A.D. the word had so exclusively a paedagogic connotation as it received after A.D. 70. I think it had more the connotation of 'Chief,' of ἐπιστάτης, to use St. Luke's word. No doubt again that the conversation of Jesus made an immense impression on those who heard Him. 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast words of eternal life,' and 'Never man spake as this man'—these words of the Fourth Gospel may not be accurate transcriptions of sentences spoken to and about Jesus, yet who can doubt that they express a true impress of the effect produced on many who heard Him? But they record rather the impress of a personality than of a doctrine.

The actions of Jesus, His deliberate course of life, do not seem to me those of a Sage, of one who feels it his mission in life to spread and establish a doctrine. Nor is there anything in the Gospel record that at all corresponds in general scope and intent to the Rule of St. Benedict. The Sermon on the Mount is obviously a compilation, and in any case is quite unsystematic. Even the Lord's Prayer, if St. Luke may be trusted, was given in response to a request from one of the disciples on what might be called a chance occasion. 'Follow Me' is a call to action, not to the acceptance of a philosophy or even of a particular course of general conduct.

Professor Bultmann's *Jesus* is a sketch of what he believes to have been the teaching of Jesus. This, in his view, is all that remains, for even the outline of the Life is irrecoverable beyond the mere fact of an execution at Jerusalem. If this be so, if all that be left of the Gospel is 'Jesus said . . .' then I venture

to say it has perished, even though most of the Gospel sayings be accepted as genuine. What is left is not the Gospel, but an echo from the past, *Vox et præterea nihil*.

Sainte-Beuve, speaking of the arid style of Antoine Arnauld and contrasting it with the more effective influence of the great men and women of Port-Royal, says: 'Truth, however exalted it may be, needs to be made man in order to touch men.'² This is good Christian doctrine; in fact, it is *the* Christian doctrine. And to be made man means being limited to a time and a place. This, in a word, is the importance of the historical element in Christianity. We need to understand the Old Testament and the course of Jewish history, internal and external, in order to understand the career of Jesus Christ, and we need to study the New Testament and the course of Church history in order to understand the effect of that career. I do not, of course, mean that every simple Christian must individually understand all this, but it must be there, so to speak, accessible to him, in book or personal ministration, in the same sort of way that the whole Bible was accessible to the old-fashioned Protestant.

The whole doctrine centres on Christ, on the career of Christ and the nature that alone made that career really effective. And the career of Christ led directly to the Cross; the Christian religion must be a doctrine of the Cross, or it is nothing.

Here again we are faced with a state of things very similar to the state of general Biblical study. The old theory, the old construction, is worn out, and a new religious theory of the Bible is not yet forthcoming. So it is with the Cross: the old formulation of the Plan of Salvation, of the Atonement effected by the Death of Christ, is inadequate for our days. But Christianity, I am convinced, cannot permanently do without one. If the career of Jesus Christ is to have a permanent meaning for us, the Cross cannot be regarded as a tragic incident, a regrettable tale, a stormy sunset to an otherwise perfect day. It must be seen to be something inevitable, significant, typical—and, I would add, gracious. The *grace* of our Lord Jesus Christ—to Christians this familiar phrase does not mean a state of mind produced by conscious imitation, but something that involves a

² *La vérité, si haute qu'elle soit, a besoin de se faire homme pour toucher les hommes* (Port-Royal, ii. 170).

gift, an inspiration, from outside. If this belief be given up, Christianity and the Christian experience is ultimately illusion.

But this grace, this χάρις, has always been regarded by Christians as indissolubly connected with the Death of Jesus on Calvary. The Lord of the Vineyard will not come and reconstitute His estate for anything less than His Son's death: it was not an accident, but somehow involved in the inevitable course of things. And all this belongs to the Historical Element, to something which 'came to pass.'

Among the accepted subjects of mediaeval religious art is what is called a *Trinità*. It represents the Three Persons of the Christian Trinity conjoined symbolically in a group. One characteristic example is in the National Gallery in London.³ Above is the Father; the Son is shown crucified; between them, in a line between the faces of the Father and the Son, is the Spirit, in the form of a Dove with outstretched wings. There is little background, little to distract the devout spectator from Divine contemplation. But the picture is not wholly in the heavenly places. The plain wooden Cross on which the Son hangs is planted in the ground, here, in this earth. Even so it seems to me we cannot contemplate eternal reality entirely detached from our earth, from human history, from the course of events out of which we spring, the course of events which has brought us to that state to which it has pleased God to call us now, and will, as long as we have our present apparatus for thought and imagination, accompany us to any state to which it shall please Him to call us and our successors in the future.

In thus treating of the Historical Element in Christianity I have perhaps mistaken my subject. It may be that I ought to have considered what is called 'the Historic Episcopate,' or the parochial system, or the Sacraments, and discussed to what extent Christians in general or the Church of England in particular must regard these things as vital, as parts of our historic inheritance which we can under no circumstances discard. But I venture to think the considerations which I have touched on are vital and that they are not always sufficiently borne in mind. I am not sure how some of what I have been saying will be held to work out in detail; in fact, I am sure that in details we shall

³ By Pesellino (1422-1457).

individually reach different conclusions. The only thing the Christian is tied to, if he is to remain a Christian, is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; but the Catholic and the Quaker will not agree as to the means of Grace, the means by which this Grace is most surely and effectually obtained. Till Christians do so agree, agree in their hearts, not only in a Concordat, there will be no 'Corporate Reunion.' Some like fruit fresh gathered, others like it cooked. 'Let everyone,' says the Apostle, 'be fully persuaded in his own mind.'

I felt it was germane to the subject to bring up the question of the present-day authority of the Bible, as otherwise a discussion of the historic episcopate and its advisability or necessity might resolve itself into mere archaeological details. As Modern Churchmen we are concerned with to-day, and no new solution of our difficulties in dealing with our old organization will be a real solution that does not explicitly recognize the diminished authority which is now accorded to the utterances of antiquity, whether of the Bible or the Fathers. Both to Catholic and to Protestant these utterances were the nails and rivets with which their fabric of religion was secured. The rivets are now most of them loose; nevertheless there is in the Gospel history—the history itself and what led up to it—an element which Christians cannot discard if they are to remain Christians. I have given you a serious illustration from old Italian Art. Let me conclude by quoting a line from a well-known hymn, from a stanza which the 1909 Historical Edition of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* left out, I suppose because the metaphor was felt by Dr. Frere and his advisers to be uncomfortable, if not ridiculous. Frances Ridley Havergal wrote :

'Anchored safe within the veil,'—

a mixed metaphor indeed, but it is only fair to Miss Havergal to remember that it is taken direct from *Hebrews* vi, 19. It seems to me to represent very well the element of illogicality which must belong to a religion that claims to be universal and final, and yet to some extent is dependent on past history. Well, the best *apologia* we can make is a counter-attack. We may say that a logical religion is likely to be a cold religion, unwarmed by the breath of life.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE HISTORICAL ELEMENT IN CHRISTIANITY

By MICHAEL OAKESHOTT, M.A., Fellow of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge.

SINCE what I am able to offer you can in no sense be called authoritative, may I explain at the beginning that what I propose is simply to present a point of view—a personal point of view in so far as it is mine, but something, I hope, a little more valuable than merely personal in that I shall try to set out, as clearly as I can, the reasons which lie behind it. The difficulties of the subject are great enough to demand a more tentative attitude than that which I have adopted, but if I speak positively rather than meticulously, I do so to avoid ambiguity and not to affect dogmatism.

That the historical element in Christianity has been regarded of the utmost importance to our religion cannot and need not be denied. On the contrary, so far as we can see, with the growth of Christianity the importance of this element has increased rather than diminished; indeed, the sensitiveness to what is 'historical' in Christianity appears to have reached something of a climax at the present time. And this circumstance raises, for me at least, two questions for which reasonable answers of some kind should be found. They are (i) What is the historical element of Christianity which has been regarded important? and (ii) Does the fact that it has been held to be important mean that it is necessarily and permanently as important as it has been held to be?

An answer to the first of these questions has been provided for us already. The historical element which has been regarded important in Christianity is not the obvious fact that Christianity is a 'founded' religion, not the fact that Christianity (in a sense) did start at a given date (for that is equally true of a great number of religions which in a more significant sense have little use for history in their beliefs); nor is it a simple recognition of the value of tradition in religion; but, rather, what it has been held

to mean is a belief in the *necessity* of that which is *prima facie* historical, or the historical as such. Christianity, so this interpretation runs, by the assertion of the necessity of certain events having taken place, put forward a view of the time-process which gave it a significance and a value which it otherwise could not possess. The atonement is a unique and necessary historical event. I need not enlarge upon this view, for it is one with which we have all been familiar since childhood; it is the traditional interpretation of the meaning of the historical element of Christianity.

The second question, however, permits no such simple explanation, and the fact that it has usually been answered in the affirmative must not deter us from examining the grounds of such, or any, reply. The assertion that this element of Christianity is necessarily as important as it has been held to be, implies, and has usually been consciously associated with, one of two theories of the nature or identity of Christianity. Christianity has been identified either with the whole original Christianity, which is held to include this particular belief; or, with a central core, of which this particular belief is a part, which has remained unchanged throughout the history of our religion. These two theories of the identity of Christianity are not always distinguished with the care required to see them clearly, and since both have been taken as grounds for an affirmative answer to our question, I must do my best to explain them a little more fully.

The first argument is this: Christianity is the whole original Christianity; this includes a belief in the necessity of the *prima facie* historical; therefore this belief is essential to Christianity. The minor premiss is an historical statement which I do not venture to question, but the major contains a theory of the identity of Christianity which is open to logical criticism. Christianity, it says, is the whole original Christianity; if something to-day proposes itself as Christianity and yet differs in any respect from the original thing, then it is not Christianity. The records we have of that beginning are the criteria by which alone we may judge the Christianity of an idea or doctrine or practice. 'To say that Christianity survives, even if weakened and disestablished, is to say that the Renaissance and the Reformation

are still incomplete.’¹ This is not a new theory, nor one peculiar to Christian theology. ‘In this consists identity,’ says Locke, ‘when the ideas [or things] it is attributed to vary not at all from what they were that moment wherein we consider their former existence, and to which we compare the present.’² It is the theory of identity without difference, the theory by which difference of any sort destroys identity; and its defects have frequently been pointed out. Its principle is simply that ‘everything is equal to itself’; it says nothing more than that *A* is *A*, and that any change whatever in *A* causes it to become other than *A*. Indeed, we may not speak at all of a ‘change in *A*.’ It excludes from the thing all the differences of its states, attributes and relations, and the result is nothing more than a barren tautology. An arbitrary line is drawn across the change and variety of the process of history, and identity is denied merely at the point at which some little education is required to recognize it. How arbitrary that line is in the case of Christianity is at once apparent; for where is this absolute original which, unchanged, is the real thing? We have no knowledge of an unchanging, original Christianity which existed at one moment in time, absolute and whole, to change which is to produce something other than Christianity. The New Testament is a record of change and development; at what point did this development cease to be Christian? The ‘teaching of Jesus,’ as we have it, is neither comprehensive nor thoroughly coherent, and a view of Christianity which identified it with the ‘religion of Jesus’ would exclude any beliefs which may have attached themselves to the experiences resulting from His death. Nor are we able to propose a selection from the beliefs and facts of those early years, for it is essential to the theory before us that *every* event and belief (up to a point which it is impossible to determine) is equally necessary to Christianity. This theory seems to me as unsatisfactory as any could well be; and it is unsatisfactory for the purpose of identifying Christianity because, and only because, it is unsatisfactory for identifying anything.

If, then, an affirmative answer to the question, Is the his-

¹ Santayana, *Winds of Doctrine*, p. 37.

² *Essay II*, xxvii 1.

torical element of Christianity necessarily as important as it has been regarded? were to depend upon such a theory as this, we should be forced to declare it a groundless assertion. But we have before us another theory which has also been taken to support an affirmative answer to our question. Its argument is as follows: there has been a history attached to Christianity, there have been changes, but Christianity itself is an unchanging core or centre which has persisted through change; this particular belief in the necessity of the *prima facie* historical is part of that core; therefore it is an essential part of Christianity. Here again the minor premiss is an historical statement of which I need say nothing; it is with the major we are concerned. The theory of identity which this argument implies may be characterized as identity of substance. It is, perhaps, only a modification of the first theory, for it, also, demands an identity without difference. This core or centre which is Christianity has been variously conceived; it has been thought of as a general tendency moving through the history of our religion, as a spirit informing it, or as an ideal or purpose guiding it; but whatever it is, the only change it has been thought to suffer is that produced by the mere passage of time, though this itself implies a formal contradiction. In all its forms it is an excessively vague theory; it admits differences but leaves them as anachronisms; they are regarded as, at any rate, partial destructions of identity. But the chief objection to it is that it makes Christianity out to be a bare and bloodless abstraction, a wretched fraction of any of our experiences, such as we are convinced, when we are not defending a theory, it can never be. Though it is true that some parts change more slowly than others, it is only the barest abstraction that can show no change at all, something which occurs alongside the facts, the historical facts of Christianity, something we can deduce but never experience, surmise but never know. Those who believe in this theory, and they are not a few, may be invited to show us this unchanging central substance. We should imagine that it might be found by whittling away the differences and so exposing the thing, but when all the differences are gone we shall discover that what remains, so far from being our religion, is 'an invulnerable nothing.' Like pure water, it has no taste.

In various ways, then, what may not unjustly be called the current theories of the identity of Christianity break down, and until we can find a more tenable theory to put in their place we not only lack grounds for an affirmative answer to our question, but grounds for any answer.

I cannot pretend to have a complete and unassailable theory of identity to offer you, and in place of such a theory I will venture the following by no means original suggestions. Identity, so far as Christianity is concerned, must be discovered in the facts of history, not as something unchanging, or some substance common to them all, but as a kind of qualitative sameness. Identity, so far from excluding differences, is meaningless in their absence, just as difference or change depend upon something whose identity is not destroyed by that change. It is not a matter of size or shape, or of anything so abstract as spirit or purpose; on the contrary, it seems to lie, first, in the avoidance of any absolute break in a thing's existence, and, beyond that and governing that, in some qualitative element to be discovered only by reference to the general character of the thing concerned. On this view of identity—and on no other, so far as I am aware—the characteristic of being Christian may properly be claimed by any doctrine, idea or practice which, no matter whence it came, has been or can be drawn into the general body of the Christian tradition without altogether disturbing its unity or breaking down its consistency. This means that an idea or practice may properly be Christian which, in part at least, runs counter to much that had previously been regarded as Christian. It means, also, that the identity of our religion is maintained, not in spite of, but because of, differences and changes. To apply the second and governing criterion of identity it would be necessary to come to some definite conclusion about the general character of Christianity, which is too large an undertaking for the present occasion. But the kind of way in which I should be inclined to think of it is like this. Christianity is a religion, and while it is not a characteristic of religion to remain unchanged throughout human history, it is one of its characteristics continually both to conform to and to lead what may be called the civilization or culture of its adherents. There is no religious idea with which we are acquainted which has re-

mained entirely unchanged. To identify Christianity with its whole original state (if that could be found) or with some unchanging core (if that could be known) is to deny its nature. A religion must, somehow, represent to its believers the highest they can believe, the best they can desire. Such beliefs and desires do not remain unchanged, and so Christianity either is something which can maintain its identity and at the same time be the highest our or any age can believe or desire, or it fails to be a religion in the full sense. And, to me, the failure of Christianity to meet the demands put upon it by present requirements would be more certain evidence of its demise than almost any alleged break in the Christian tradition. In short, the argument is this: religion is characterized by its power to give life and to give it abundantly; Christianity is a religion; and therefore it can properly be said to maintain its identity while continually admitting perhaps wholly new ideas and practices, no matter whence they come, and while continually discarding perhaps thoroughly traditional ideas and practices, so long as the modifications are effected in such a way as to cause no absolute break in the development and to comply with its general nature as a religion.

The result of my argument so far is, then, that although the belief in the necessity of the *prima facie* historical has been regarded as an important element of Christianity, we cannot assert that it is *necessarily* either so important as it has been held to be, or even important at all, until we have tested it by a sound theory of the identity of Christianity; and according to the theory of identity I have suggested, whether or not this belief *is* important to Christianity depends upon circumstances. It is, then, only by considering these circumstances that we can hope to discover any grounds for delivering a rational judgment of the value of this belief.

The value of a specifically religious idea or belief is, in part at least, to be judged pragmatically. It might be possible (indeed, I do not think it would be difficult) to show that a belief in the necessity of the *prima facie* historical is a belief in something very much less than reality, something in itself inconsistent and therefore theoretically worthless, but such a demonstration in this place would be both frivolous and irrelevant. Religious ideas, unlike philosophical ideas, do not depend

entirely for their value upon a demonstration of their ultimate truth : they have another purpose, the fulfilment of which is subject to a pragmatic test. To the philosopher, then, who should tell us that our faith in history is pathetically misplaced, we may answer that the question before us is not the ultimate reality of historical events, but whether or not a belief in the *prima facie* historical is a permanent religious need which demands some kind of satisfaction. Those apologists, I think, are in error who say that Christianity has ever, in any ultimate sense, asserted the essential reality and uniqueness of all events and of time, for such an assertion is no part of a specifically religious belief, and Christianity is first and last a religion. But Christianity certainly has asserted a very general need for some kind of religious belief in the necessity of the *prima facie* historical, and, if we may judge from the past history and the present state of our religion, this assertion is very well grounded in fact. There has been, and there seems now to be, a very general need in the religious consciousness of Christendom for this kind of belief in history. But before we use this as an argument to establish that belief as an important and even necessary part of Christianity we should, I think, consider the following facts.

This belief and need for belief in the necessity of the *prima facie* historical, besides having some foundation in human nature in general, was inherited by Christianity, like so much else, from Judaism : it is what has been called 'the Jewish principle of considering as the object of religious emotion a something which has occurred once for all.' That, of course, is not to say that it cannot be in the fullest sense Christian, but I think it should make us more critical of it than we might otherwise be, for 'gefährlich ist es, Erbe zu sein.' By some means or other, perhaps through the instrumentality of Christianity itself, this belief in history has, since the eighteenth century, become part of our normal *Weltanschauung* ; this peculiarly Hebrew belief, which had little or no counterpart in Greek culture, has been westernized. I need hardly offer a proof of this. The tremendous power of persuasion exercised by an historical analysis over uneducated minds was magnified in the nineteenth century to immense proportions. All intellectual effort had a tendency to run to history, and the reading of history became

itself a means of grace and even a religion.³ The consequence of this is that a certain artificial and inflated demand for history and a belief in history has been created. We *believe* in history; it is part of our religion because it is part of our mentality. But this ideal of *wie es eigentlich gewesen* is little better than an illusion, and its apotheosis, *passéism*, is a sign of the times: history and not conscience, in these days, does make cowards of us all. But, as far as our civilization is concerned, so much belief in history seems to be working its own ruin; the intellectual energy of our generation is turning in other directions, and the power to stand on the point of the present is returning. This artificial and inflated demand for a belief in history is, then, not necessary, but the creature of a period, and when it disappears, as it seems like to do, its counterpart in Christianity will be seriously lacking in any real contact with the normal outlook of our civilization. We should, I think, also bear in mind that the necessity for this belief has often been denied by many religious men brought up in the Christian tradition. We cannot assert that it is a need universally felt even among Christians.

Our conclusion, then, if I may venture to state it definitely, is that this belief in the necessity of the *prima facie* historical shows no sign of permanence or necessity. It has a long and honourable history in Christian tradition; it has undoubtedly been held an essential part of Christianity; but I can find no adequate reason for supposing that it is so. Lacking it, Christianity, it seems to me, would not lose its identity, were the modification to be effected at the demand of a religious consciousness educated in our religion. Our second question must, then, be answered in the negative.

It is a comparatively simple matter to detect inadequacy in ideas and systems of ideas, but we can claim to have performed no useful service until we have pointed to the affirmative ground upon which our negatives are based. And the state of affairs I have detailed, like all negatives, demands its positive complement, which I can best supply, as I see it, by asking two more questions. (i) Is the belief in the necessity of the *prima facie*

³ Troeltsch, *Der Historismus u. seine Probleme*. Schweitzer, *Civilization and Ethics*.

historical the only interpretation of the historical element of Christianity? (ii) And, if not, what other interpretation is there which gives us greater insight into this element of our religion?

I have tried to make clear that what we have been examining is only the traditional interpretation of the historical element of Christianity, and the rest of my argument would, I think, go to support a suggestion that there might be another view of the matter, no less Christian and a little more logical. The traditional view is a crude interpretation, the work of naïve religious minds seeking a theory of any sort rather than of critical minds seeking consistency. It is without philosophical plausibility, or, when we see it clearly, any lasting practical value, for what practical value it possesses depends upon a condition of mind neither permanent nor essentially Christian. But I believe that there is another and better interpretation of this felt necessity for the historical and of the particular satisfaction Christianity has afforded it.

Religion and the religious consciousness, as I understand them, are essentially practical. A religion, in a manner to which a philosophy is not subject, may be proved lacking by being proved inadequate to the demands of the ordinary life of ordinary people. Our felt wants are, of necessity, the starting point of our religion; not the complex desires of that kind of sophistication which would see clearly the nature and meaning of the universe as a whole, but the simple needs inseparable from an active and practical life. Religion exists to satisfy no craving for knowledge apart from the knowledge which comes with the mere strength and courage to take life as it is and 'turn its necessities to glorious gain.' One of these felt wants, one to which the religious consciousness is particularly sensitive, is the need for an almost sensible perception of the reality of the object of belief. Religion demands not that the necessity for the existence of what it believes in should be proved, for that is an academic interest, but to be made intensely aware of the actual existence of the object of belief. A kleptomaniac may know that it is wrong to steal, but he does not know it in such a way as to feel it. And a philosophic proof, for example, of the necessity of human immortality has little or no religious value. We cannot love or live upon the knowledge of a mere neces-

sity; love and life demand an immediate awareness, if not of the senses, at least of memory and mind. The thoughts of religion must also be feelings in that they must possess the force and liveliness, which we connect with feeling, to strike the mind and compel not merely acquiescence but action. Religions have replied to this demand in various ways; and no religion has left it entirely unanswered. Some have depended upon ritual to create this living contact between the believer and the believed, some upon the actual presence of that which is worshipped, some upon a visible representation of him. Idolatry is an expression of this need, a crude and primitive expression perhaps, but, so far as we can see, a necessary stage in the development of this element of religion.

One of the revolutions which Christianity proposed to the religious consciousness was that this actuality, given the necessary preparation of mind, could be more fully achieved on a higher plane; it proposed a religion more purely spiritual, yet one which should give an intensity of awareness of the object of belief so far denied to those who clung too closely to sensible actuality. Like other religions, it developed its rituals and its sacraments; but, unlike many others, by the emphasis it placed upon history, upon the actual happenings of the life of its Founder, it removed from sense to memory and mind some at least of its power to give actuality to the thing believed. The historical element of Christianity took the place of cruder and more primitive methods of providing this necessary actuality. 'A Christianity without sacraments,' it has been said, 'could never have converted Europe,' and perhaps its greatest sacrament was what we call its historical element. 'When historical examples are pointed out to us, there is a kind of appeal, with which we are flattered, made to our senses, as well as to our understanding,' says Bolingbroke in his *Letters on History*, and how potent the historical is to satisfy this craving for immediate awareness, every generation of Christians testifies.

What has the paraphernalia of historical evidences to do with spiritual need — not the temporary and immediate need which is satisfied only by immediate consolation and confidence, but the more permanent need of the religious consciousness of finding an intellectual world in which to be at home?

To this question, then, our answer has been that in the crude and obvious sense history and the historical have little or no connection with spiritual need — are, indeed, something almost foreign to it—but in a more subtle sense the connection may be real enough. It has been argued that the demand of the religious consciousness for an individual and unique experience is itself a demand for a belief in the necessity of the *prima facie* historical, but it is, I think, a false argument. What religion demands is not a consciousness of the necessity and individuality of past events, but a consciousness of the individuality of present experience. What Rickert calls the 'principle of uniqueness' is something which is, indeed, to be found in history, but is to be found also, and found independently, in the determination of present practical life to face 'the irrepressible New' and achieve some measure of freedom from the past. And because religion is nothing if not contemporary, the historical element of our religion must be interpreted so as to give it a permanent and not a merely temporary meaning. In place of the old interpretation of the historical element in Christianity, that it means simply and crudely a belief in the necessity of the *prima facie* historical and is merely a denial of the Christ-myth, I would put this other interpretation, that this element of our religion means that the necessary actuality of the object of religious belief must be sought continually on a higher plane than one of mere sense, and that when sought there it will be found more intensely than ever before. And the path which it points us to ends in the achievement of a sensibility for which such a belief in history also is an idolatry.

The conclusion, then, at which I arrive is that the historical element of our religion is not necessarily historical at all; that is, its essential characteristic lies not in a belief in the necessity of the *prima facie* historical, but in its provision of the required actuality for the object of religious belief. Ritual and sacrament minister to this same need, and in some respects labour under fewer and less serious theoretical deficiencies; and, while this belief in history is justified by its fruits, it is justified only so long as it bears those fruits. What I have tried to show is that the ability of the historical element of Christianity to achieve its end, that is, to give actuality to the believed, depends upon

a certain mental outlook neither peculiarly Christian nor necessarily permanent. It is not to be doubted that we shall always possess a certain susceptibility to history and its power to give life to thought; what varies and what is by no means permanent is the degree of that susceptibility. The Jews possessed it in a very high degree, and the culture of nineteenth century Europe was vividly conscious of it, but our generation seems to share that sensitiveness less and less intensely, with the consequence, not that Christianity is dying, but that the presentation of it must in this respect change to changing needs, becoming, and not for the first time, a religion in which no servile archaeology inhibits vitality or chills imagination. On some of the current theories of the identity of Christianity such a change would imply a destruction of our religion, but I have tried to show that it is these theories which are fallacious and not our religion which is moribund. What that change will amount to in detail I must be excused from predicting, but that we can change much without ceasing to be Christians is the view I have suggested and for which I have endeavoured to find a logical apology.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HISTORICAL ELEMENT IN THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF INCARNATION

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TO discuss any theological doctrine at once adequately and in isolation is, from the nature of the case, impossible. Theological doctrines are theories which attempt to state the truth about the realities with which religion is concerned; and, as such, they must inevitably be philosophical. But no philosophical theory can be discussed in isolation; for no single truth (I must assert) is independent of, or permanently isolable from, the whole truth. An adequate consideration of any one doctrine, therefore, implies something like a whole theory of reality. It is true that many doctrines seem to be pictorial rather than philosophical, expressing imaginative symbol rather than truth; yet such doctrines can neither satisfy permanently a mind which wishes to think, nor set limits beyond which thought may not pass. Theology must go beyond them; though to what extent theology itself is bound to undertake a philosophical examination of its own presuppositions we need not enquire.

From this, two consequences follow. First, where there are varieties of philosophical outlook there will be varieties of Christian doctrine. Different thinkers have sought, and will continue to seek, an interpretation of Christianity in terms of that theory of the world which, in their view, explains most adequately the experience they wish to understand. And this experience, for the Christian theologian, must be the world as it confronts the Christian, taking account of all that it contains, whether distinctively Christian or not. Doctrine, therefore, is not immutable, but subject to the changes and varieties of systems of thought. Secondly, doctrines will be subject, in some degree, to uncertainty and doubt. However 'authoritative' a given doctrine may be held to be, by reason of its antiquity or of the formal manner of its promulgation, a claim that it expresses truth must nevertheless be subject to those

canons which govern truth in all branches of speculative enquiry alike. Doctrines may indeed be imposed as opinions by authority; but, ultimately, truth can have no criterion beyond itself, and to seek elsewhere a basis for the truth of a theological doctrine is, in the end, irrational. From these consequences we cannot, and in my opinion we should not wish to, escape. It is from this standpoint that I approach the subject of this paper.

I begin the discussion with an assumption, leaving its further interpretation till a later stage. I assume, namely, that the Christian valuation of the person and work of Jesus is justified. But I purposely use the indefinite term 'valuation,' for I do not wish to assume the truth of any particular theory, in terms of which this valuation may have been interpreted. For reasons I have given, these theories (our traditional doctrines), however valuable they may be, cannot be regarded as final or axiomatic for all later theological enquiry. Of the valuation, which these lofty and far-reaching theories sought to interpret, it will be enough to say that it seemed to involve the belief, left long undefined, that in the person of Jesus the divine and human were in some sense united. It was belief (to use later terms) in the divine *σαρκωθέντα* in its full sense of *ἐνανθρωπήσαντα*, i.e., in 'incarnation' with a primary reference to a particular historical person.

This primary valuation, as we know, was further defined as time went on; and its implications were drawn out so that it became, not only a doctrine of the person of Christ, but also a theory of God, of man, of the world. It is the focus, and again the centre of radiation, of Christian theology: reality interpreted in the light of an experience dominated by the valuation of a person, Jesus of Nazareth. The problem we have to consider is the importance of the historical element in the central doctrine of this 'incarnational' theology. The problem involves two distinct, though connected, enquiries, a wider and a narrower. In the light of the Christian idea of Incarnation, what (i) is the importance or status of the historical order or course of events in general, and what (ii) is the relative importance of those particular historical occurrences, the life and person of Jesus, from which the idea arose?

Bernard Bosanquet, writing on contemporary British philosophy,¹ maintained that the most fundamental line of division in the systems of thought of the present day was marked by the attitude each adopted towards the problem of the reality of the temporal order. Such a division, he considered, was more ultimate than the older and vaguer opposition of realism and idealism, to which, however, it tended roughly to correspond, and roughly, like that older opposition, it divided philosophy into two great groups: for the one time is fundamental, for the other it is not. But not only in philosophy is this issue of fundamental importance. Both attitudes have from early times found a home within Christianity. We may see in them the double line of descent of Christianity itself. On the one side is the idea of process through time as fundamental, inherited from Judaism, and especially from the product of Judaism which came as a special legacy to Christianity, the apocalyptic eschatology of the world's end. On the other side is the more specifically Hellenic, and from the third and fourth centuries more particularly Neo-platonic, heritage, for which degrees of perfection or levels of reality, rather than successive epochs in time, were the dominant conceptions. Both tendencies have remained, often curiously unreconciled, as may be clearly seen in popular ideas of immortality.

This issue is one of the most far-reaching in philosophy. For the one view the temporal order of events is a fundamental character of reality as a whole; for the other it is a character only of certain beings or worlds within it. The form which the idea of Incarnation will take will obviously depend in no small degree upon whether the interpretation is effected in terms of one or the other of these philosophical positions. But, so far as I can see, belief in Incarnation does not, by itself, involve acceptance of one of these positions more clearly than the other. An interpretation of the meaning of Incarnation would be possible in terms of either. The issue between them, in fact, can only be decided upon more general grounds. To attempt to settle it here would obviously be futile, and the most I can undertake is to show that this is so, and then to offer some interpretation of my own. But I must add, parenthetically, that it

¹ *The Meeting of Extremes in Contemporary British Philosophy*, 1921.

makes all the difference 'whether the idea of progress or betterment is to be applied to the universe as a whole or only to certain beings within it.'² The assertion of the ultimate reality of time really implies the former, whereas the latter is quite consistent with the denial of that assertion. Evolution may be a fact, even though reality as a whole is not evolutionary; indeed, it may well be urged that evolution, since it seems to imply the interaction of a changing element and a relatively more stable environment, is itself only intelligible if predicated, not of the universe, but of the parts within it.

It has sometimes been maintained, however, that the great significance which Christianity necessarily attaches to certain events in the past of itself implies belief in the ultimate reality of the historical process—its reality, that is, for the universe as a whole. This opinion, I think, rests upon a misapprehension; and, by criticism of it, I shall develop a rival interpretation. F. H. Bradley said³ very truly that in philosophy 'False Alternative is that fallacy which, beyond all comparison, is most prevalent and insidious.' The contention before us is an instance of this fallacy. If it is assumed, as it seems here to be implied, that the alternatives are the acceptance of time as an ultimate character of the universe and the dismissal of time as mere illusory appearance, then no doubt belief in Incarnation would require the former. But a whole philosophical tradition, to say the least, depends upon a denial of the validity of this antithesis of fully real and merely illusory. The problem of the status of the historical is a particular case of the yet more fundamental problem of the status of all finite existence, as this is in our experience; and it is from this standpoint that it must be considered. According to the view which, since I cannot here defend it, I am forced simply to assume, nothing of what comes in common limited experience can be predicated with complete truth of that whole which is the ultimate reality; yet no element in this experience is, on this view, without meaning and value. All such elements fulfil a worthy, and even a necessary, function, albeit a subordinate one. So long, I would urge, as we work with the antithesis of fully real and merely illusory, we shall

² Pringle-Pattison, *The Idea of God*, p. 382.

³ *Principles of Logic*, ed. 2, ii. 415, 430.

fail, both to find a solution of the problems which confront us, and to do justice to our own highest experiences. Everywhere it is a question of degree, of how far some particular finite existence succeeds in expressing the nature of what is real. To turn all such existences into illusion is absurd; they are our own experience, and we have nothing else. But to rest in them as final realities is to do violence both to our reason and to our sense of value. We are, indeed, accustomed to take as solid reality that selection and interpretation of experience with which in common life we have to work. But however difficult, however unnecessary for most practical purposes, it may be to divest ourselves of this assumption, it does not stand the test either of criticism or of experience. 'This 'real world' of common life is itself an interpretation, in large measure practical, and never really either final or fixed. To rise above this common world is the achievement of all great experience. The antithesis in question is, as Bradley has said with his accustomed ruthlessness, 'the prejudice which everywhere Common Sense opposes to philosophy. Common Sense is persuaded that the first rude way in which it interprets phenomena, is ultimate truth; and neither reasoning, nor the ceaseless protests of its own daily experience, can shake its assurance.'⁴ The events and so-called 'facts' of ordinary experience have everywhere their importance, but not everywhere an equal importance; they have everywhere their degree of reality, but not everywhere an equal degree. Thus reality, so far as the world of our finite experience is concerned, must be measured everywhere by degree. The world of our experience is subject to constant modification; and (more important) it is susceptible, to an indefinite extent, of transformation and expansion. Indeed, it varies enormously from person to person and, for each person, from time to time, according to the power of insight and appreciation which each possesses. The degree of reality which a given experience may claim is measured, according to the view I am assuming, both by the degree of value and by the degree of rationality which that experience displays. Thus it is in our greatest experiences—when we live more fully and see more deeply—that we experience least inadequately what alone is fully real, though

⁴ *Appearance and Reality*, p. 448.

never wholly within our comprehension. To know the infinite is not to disparage or to escape from the finite, but to see the finite itself as within, though subordinate to, the one concrete whole, by contrast with which it is essentially abstract and incomplete. 'The world of realities, we may say in a word, is the world of values, and values are not judged absolutely but are everywhere measured by degree.'⁵

But the view which I am advocating has also its positive side. If it denies full reality to all finite events and persons, it denies some measure of value and reality to none. Every existence, however inconspicuous and transient it may be, will have its eternal significance, the degree of which may be indefinitely great. Yet the value of each is measured, not by its self-sufficiency or independence, but by the degree of service it renders to, and the measure of grace it receives from, that one whole which is both the source and goal of them all. It is in such service that the fulness of life consists. It is not by seeking high status for myself in isolation that I am exalted, but by finding my goodness and my life in what, though continuous with me, is more than I. This is so in morals, where I seek, not my present satisfaction, but what would satisfy me if, by joining myself to some greater whole, I became what I ought to be. And in religion, where in a sense I may seem to have achieved my end at last, that achievement is of grace as much as of good works, and consists in the identification of myself in thought and will with my God, which at once exalts and abases me. The consequence of such a view is not to emphasize the transiency of each finite self, but rather to reveal the indefinite extent of its capacity.

It is from this standpoint, and not from that of the false alternative of real and illusory, that the status of the finite world, and by consequence the status of that world in its aspect of a historical process, must be considered. The estimate of the historical which such a consideration suggests may be represented by a further quotation from Bradley. 'But to me,' he says, 'as to everyone else, the world is throughout full of change, and as to this, I suppose there is no question. The question is how change stands to that which changes or shows

⁵ Bradley, *Essays on Truth and Reality*, p. 64.

change, and what, and how far subordinate, is the place which belongs in the Universe to this its aspect of change. . . . And so again it is with becoming and the endless incompleteness of the world. To deny that this side of things is fact would in my view be absurd. But on the other hand, to accept this side of things as real in itself and unconditionally, and to proclaim it as being in its own character the last word about the Universe, seems to me no less ridiculous.”⁶

That this whole position has grave difficulties is obvious. They centre, as usual, round the problem of the precise relation which exists between the infinite and its finite elements, the one and the many. These difficulties must here be left on one side. But I suggest that it is a position which does justice to the finest in experience, and can supply a real interpretation of that valuation which Christianity has set upon the events from which it arose. Incarnation will be but another name for the participation of finite existences in the nature of ultimate reality, or of the communication of the life of the whole to its constituent but subordinate members. We may speak, if we like, of the self-transcendence of the finite, finding its fuller life in the higher; or, again, of the self-condescension of the infinite, which, through the life of the finite world, is constantly replenished or constructed. In each case, life consists in self-giving with a positive end, dying to live. Both terms are essential, God and the world: otherwise the finite would lose its importance and Incarnation be impossible. Without the world, we may therefore agree, GOD is not GOD; but only because the world, so far as it is real, is real in Him.

The conclusion of the first enquiry may therefore be stated as follows. An interpretation of Incarnation in terms of a system of thought for which the historical order has full reality, the universe being a ‘growing universe,’ may well be possible. Yet belief in the full reality of the historical is not implied by the idea of Incarnation. What this idea certainly does imply is the real worth of the finite world, and by consequence of the historical. But I suggest that the real worth of the finite world is best secured, not by claiming for it the self-sufficiency or independence which its full reality would involve, but by under-

⁶ *Essays on Truth and Reality*, p. 471.

standing that its worth consists in the function, subordinate though necessary, it fulfils within that concrete whole, which is not itself subject to process.

Troeltsch, in two books which discuss the claim of Christianity to be the absolute religion⁷ and the significance of the historicity of Jesus for faith,⁸ laid stress upon a broad contrast between the modern and the pre-modern outlook upon Christianity. The pre-modern outlook is dominated by contrasts and discontinuities: natural and super-natural, God and the world, human and divine. The world is gone wrong out of its original course, and human nature is vitiated by a taint from which it is powerless to cleanse itself. Consequently, the redemption wrought by Christ is conceived as a catastrophic act of divine intervention, a crisis changing the course of the world's history. Christianity is absolute in the sense that it is without analogy: it is from above, supernatural; all else is from below, natural. It offers 'a home of salvation which perpetuates the primary historical miracle in the miracle-workings of the Church and of the divine word of Scripture.'⁹ For such a position, as Troeltsch points out, the historicity of Jesus is not a problem but an unconditionally necessary presupposition. In contrast with this, the modern outlook is dominated by the idea of continuity. The contrasts of the earlier view are abandoned: 'here the antithesis is not "human" and "divine," but all is at once human and divine.'¹⁰ 'The correlative ideas of the essence (Wesen) of religion, of this essence in the history of religion, and of Christianity as the absolute religion, are henceforward the apologetic foundation of so-called modern or liberal theology.'¹¹ Christianity is absolute, not in the sense that it is without analogy, but in the sense that it is the highest point in a continuous gradation; and the salvation wrought by Christ is not a catastrophic intervention, but a supreme revelation of what is henceforward seen to be the ideal for all things, in which it is already in some measure manifest.

⁷ *Die Absolutheit des Christentums und die Religionsgeschichte*, 2 Aufl., Tübingen, 1912.

⁸ *Die Bedeutung der Geschichtlichkeit Jesu für den Glauben*, Tübingen, 1911.

⁹ *Die Bedeutung*, usw., p. 19.

¹⁰ *Die Absolutheit*, usw. p. 14.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

This account of the contrast between the modern and the pre-modern standpoints may be accepted as, in a broad sense, true; and such detailed qualifications as complete accuracy might require may here be neglected.¹² Troeltsch identifies himself entirely with the modern position, and we, I think, must do the same. I have already argued that the historical standpoint cannot be regarded as ultimate for philosophy; but when it is adopted, as for many purposes it must be, the Incarnation will not appear as a crisis, isolated and without analogy, in the world's history. Evolutionary process is a fact, and the Incarnation must be interpreted, when historically regarded, in terms of it, even though such an interpretation must (as I have suggested) remain partial, in that it does not ask the last questions. The Incarnation will thus appear as the climax of a long development, intelligible, in part at least, in terms of its antecedents and environment: Jesus being a product of his time and circumstances, inheriting the traditions of his race, and passing them on enriched by his own great experience, to mingle and combine with those of the non-Semitic world of Europe: a process, indeed, with its points of sudden 'emergence' and apparent crises, yet always really continuous, in the sense of evolutionary or epigenetic, from that day to this. The element of crisis or sudden emergence may, at times, and in his case, be more conspicuous than that of continuity; but really in every development there is both continuity and novelty at once: it is just this combination, so difficult to understand, but everywhere so apparent, that development means.

It is from this standpoint that our second enquiry must be undertaken. I have used the word Incarnation for the most part without the article. In what sense does the Christian idea require us to speak of *the* Incarnation; or, in what sense is the Incarnation in Jesus unique?

I have rejected the views that make it unique in the sense that his life marked a crisis in the history of reality, and in the sense that his coming was a miraculous intervention, 'from

¹² It might be held that an important qualification is required in the case of the Christian application of the conception of the λόγος during the ante-Nicene period. It is worth noting, however, that Troeltsch does not agree with this, cf., e.g., *Die Absolutheit*, p. 20.

above' as opposed to 'from below.' I have done so because they seem to me inconsistent, the one with a philosophical position, the other with the standpoint of history. I shall now try to show that, though uniqueness may be claimed for the Incarnation in Jesus in the most valuable and only real sense, the sense in which it is commonly claimed in fact defeats its own purpose.

Here, as everywhere where serious thought begins, we are confronted by difficult problems, which commonly have a logical aspect. We are more accustomed to use than to examine the categories of thought with which we habitually work. It is so with 'uniqueness.' Detail is here impossible. I must content myself with asserting that, so far as I can see, uniqueness is meaningless if you try to take it in the sense of a complete discontinuity, making it consist in isolation or unparalleledness; for to call a thing wholly unparalleled is at once to compare it and to call it incomparable. Uniqueness has a meaning only if it is taken in the sense of individuality, by which I mean in the sense of an element or member with a special function. It consists in the special place a member occupies in a system or whole: each member makes to that system a contribution which no other member exactly repeats. Yet the member, though unique, is not isolated, but essentially a feature in a system, and both unintelligible and impossible apart from the system from which it draws its life and to which it renders its service. Uniqueness belongs either to the whole itself or to a member of the whole, and has no other meaning.

The bearing of these logical considerations should be clear. To understand the sense in which the Incarnation in Jesus is unique you must see him, not in isolation, but in his setting in the whole. He is unique, not as coming from another sphere, but as occupying in our own sphere—the *one* world of our experience—a position that is not duplicated. To understand him, you must see him in relation to the whole, and the whole in relation to him: that, indeed, is what *understanding* always means. This, I think, is fundamental.

I shall be met, perhaps, with the familiar objection: 'You are allowing only a difference in degree; what is required is a difference in kind.' In reply, I might fairly suggest that the

objector has probably not considered what this distinction means, and that it may be less absolute than he supposes;¹³ but this I will pass by. More important is another consideration. This demand, no doubt, is made professedly in the interests of a high view of God and of Jesus. But I believe it has in fact quite the opposite result. You may succeed in so exalting Jesus that he has no parallel or analogy in the world besides. But what have you then achieved? You have made him foreign to our comprehension (indeed, as I shall show, you have vastly decreased the credibility of the facts you wish to establish); and you have done it at the expense of all besides. It is easy to exalt the particular case, so that it is no longer subject to the contamination of the common world; but it is you, with your absolute distinctions, who have made that world common, whereas, had you been content to see all in its relatedness, you would have seen, not your special case defiled by a common world, but a world made pure by the purity of its own great example. Value does not depend upon exclusiveness and relatedness, but on inclusiveness; a thing has value when it fulfils what all implicitly contain, possessing the nature that they possess, but after a more eminent manner. Your absolute discontinuities have the effect, not of exalting Jesus, but of degrading the world.

The position which endeavours to confine Incarnation to one instance destroys the greatness of the Christian idea. That idea, if its implications are not suppressed, makes it possible to see all creation as one system, of which Jesus is a part; the part is organic to the whole, as is the whole to the part, and each must be interpreted accordingly. The result will not be a 'reduced' Christology; on the contrary, it will be a greatly expanded doctrine of Incarnation. And if one great instance seems to stand out above all the rest, the logical course is, not to seek its explanation in its supposed isolation from other things, but rather to use it as the formula¹⁴ in terms of which

¹³ The problem, in fact, is difficult. The difference, it may be suggested, between a difference in kind and a difference in degree is itself a difference in degree: or at all events that, in the last resort, a difference in kind, in any strict sense, is always relative to some special and limited (though perhaps unspecified) interest or condition, and only has a meaning when so taken.

¹⁴ Mr. Edwyn Bevan has suggested 'formula' as a rendering for *λόγος* (*Early Greek Philosophy*, p. xv).

the lesser instances must be interpreted. Moreover, the position I am opposing is really inconsistent with Incarnation itself. The essence of Incarnation, as I have already suggested, consists in the infinite manifest in the finite, or in the finite exalted above its own mere finitude by reason of its place and function in the whole. But this becomes inexplicable if it is held that there is no analogy between the finite and the infinite. To eliminate the difference is no doubt fatal, and issues in the flat-level of pantheism; but, on the other hand, to turn that difference into an absolute division is no less fatal. Neither error can do justice to that element of self-transcendence which is at the centre of every great experience, above all in religion, and is entirely in harmony with the idea of Incarnation. It was clearly seen, before Christianity was a century old, that a docetic Christology was inconsistent with the Christian conviction; for that conviction implied just the contact of divine and human which docetism wished to avoid. But it is little better, having admitted one instance of divine indwelling, to stop short at that point and deny to the principle its wider application. Both positions alike decline to take seriously the consequences of a doctrine of Incarnation, and so end by suppressing its real implications.

We conclude, therefore, that Incarnation is not confined to one instance: the one instance, if unique, is unique in the sense that, more adequately than other instances, it furnishes the formula for the whole, revealing its nature more fully. But in what sense is our knowledge of the truth of Incarnation dependent upon that one instance alone? Is it true that our faith in Incarnation is based solely upon Jesus, and that apart from him we know hardly anything of God as indwelling? I do not think we either can or should wish to maintain this.

The very nature of historical evidence itself shows that an event in the past can never form the exclusive basis of a belief. Historical evidence is a matter of probable inference, and all inference (probable and certain alike) must rest upon a basis, which in the end is always in some sense my present experience. The proof of a past event consists in inferring from what I already accept to something else which is analogous. Where it not analogous in some degree, no conceivable evidence would be sufficient to establish it; for inference, whether historical or

not, always consists in the expansion of my present world of knowledge to include what that world is seen to imply; and there can be no implication without continuity. It is for this reason that the degree of evidence required to establish a given past event varies enormously, on the one side with the nature of the event to be established, on the other with the presuppositions of the mind which infers. Historical evidence is always relative both to what is proved and to him who proves it. All history, therefore, is based upon the standpoint of its author; 'and experience testifies that, as a matter of fact, there is no single history which is not so based, which does not derive its individual character from the peculiar standpoint of the author. There is no such thing as a history without a prejudication; the real distinction is between the writer who has his prejudications without knowing what they are, and whose prejudications, it may be, are false, and the writer who consciously orders and creates from the known foundation of that which for him is the truth.'¹⁵ From this it follows that events in the past can themselves only be established upon the ground of their coherence with what is already accepted, the evidence consisting in the degree of coherent connexion between the accepted world, upon which the inference rests, and the fact inferred. This, of course, does not mean that I can never believe in what goes beyond my present ideas; it means only that I should not logically accept as true what, when combined with my present knowledge, renders my experience less coherent than before. From these considerations two consequences follow. First, the more isolated or non-analogous the event we seek to establish, the less probable does it become. It was for this reason that I said above that the more the Incarnation is asserted to be unique, in the sense that it is rendered exclusive and non-analogous, the more was its credibility decreased.¹⁶ Secondly, the fact that

¹⁵ Bradley, *The Presuppositions of Critical History*, Oxford, 1874: a book excessively hard to procure, but unduly neglected.

¹⁶ It is necessary to guard here against a possible misapprehension. The more exclusive or non-analogous an alleged fact is made, the more improbable it becomes. But that does not mean that the more *valuable* the alleged fact, the more improbable. For, as we have seen, to possess value is not to be exclusive but inclusive. A fact of great value *may*, for that very reason, be *more* probable, for it may so interpret and illuminate the whole, rendering it more coherent and, as it were, lighting up the dark places, that its own probability becomes very high.

belief in Jesus, conceived as Christianity has conceived him, is possible, itself shows that our faith in Incarnation is based, not upon him alone, but upon him in his place within our world, *i.e.* upon our world with him included. Instead, therefore, of saying that only in him can we know GOD in the Christian sense, we should say that through him it is possible to know God in some measure everywhere. We should perhaps agree that the strongest evidence for the validity of the Christian valuation of Jesus is to be found in the incalculable influence he has had, and still has, upon the world, purifying and refining it. But this very fact—the fact that he has found an echo through the ages—shows that faith in Incarnation is based, not upon him alone, but upon a whole experience illuminated by him.

A faith in Incarnation in the Christian sense is therefore not based *exclusively* upon Jesus. But this still leaves open the question as to the degree of importance which He must have for such a faith. To this question I can give no final answer; and I think no one could do so. But, without making any attempt at completeness, I will draw attention to certain matters which are relevant.

There are facts to which, unless we shut our eyes, we cannot remain blind. Jesus himself (it may be said with the reverence of truthfulness) was of his time, race, country, and the product of these: the first century, the eastern end of the Mediterranean, the Jewish nation. We can now, thanks to critics and historians, see again the 'historical Jesus' more clearly than has been possible for perhaps eighteen and a half centuries—for he was soon lost sight of. Yet the result has been curious. The words of Schweitzer are now famous:

'Whatever the final solution may be, the historical Jesus . . . can no more render to modern theology the services it claimed from its half historical, half modern Jesus. He will be no more the Jesus Christ to whom, in its long-accustomed manner, the religion of the present can ascribe its own ideas and thoughts, as it would with the Jesus of its own making. Known in the particular definiteness of his ideas and actions, he will be for our time ever something strange and enigmatic.

'The study of the life of Jesus has had a remarkable history. It set out to find the historical Jesus, and thought it could set him, just as he is, in our time as teacher and saviour. It loosed the bands by which for centuries he had been riveted to the rocks of ecclesiastical

doctrine, and rejoiced, as life and movement came once again into the figure, and it saw the historical man Jesus advancing to meet it. But he did not pause, but passed by our time and returned back to his own. And it surprised and horrified the theology of the last decade that, with all its violence and strained interpretation, it could not keep him in our time, but had to let him go. He returned back to his own time with the same necessity with which the released pendulum swings back to its original position. To rediscover the historical Jesus is to set Him, back from His time into our own.' ¹⁷

To rediscover the historical Jesus is in itself to set him back, out of our time, into his own.

To these fine words I will add others, which contain what may seem an even more serious admission. It is hard, says Troeltsch,¹⁸ to imagine, in the light of what we know of the immense length of man's history (past and future) and of the vastness of his world, that there is a single point in this history which is the centre of all mankind. 'That is in religion what geocentrism and anthropocentrism are in cosmology and metaphysic. To these two centrisms (Zentrismen) belongs, by its whole logical nature, Christocentrism also.' To ascribe such a central position to Jesus, he continues,¹⁹ 'accords with the idyllic littleness and narrowness of the world-picture of antiquity or the middle ages, with its few thousand years of human history and its expectation of the return of Christ at the conclusion of the world's history. But to the man of to-day it is strange and unintelligible, for his general instinctive presuppositions do not accord with it.'

I see no reason to dispute the contentions contained in these passages, and I do not wish seriously to qualify them. But I must add certain explanations. 'Every individual,' said Hegel, 'is the son of his people at a particular stage of its development. No one can leap beyond the spirit of his people any more than he can leap beyond the earth.'²⁰ Such a statement is one-sided; and Hegel himself corrected it by saying elsewhere that a man who is in advance of his world is so by expressing that world more completely than his neighbours.²¹ It is, I think, in some such way as this, and not by making them independent of their

¹⁷ *Geschichte der Leben Jesu Forschung*, 4 Aufl., Tübingen, 1926, pp. 631f.

¹⁸ *Die Bedeutung*, usw. p. 15.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

²⁰ *Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, herausg. G. Lasson, Leipzig, 1920, i. 73f.

²¹ Rosenkranz, *Hegels Leben*, Berlin, 1844, p. 550.

environment, that we should try to understand the greatness both of Jesus and of all great men. A man is great, not by being of no time, but by embodying in terms of his temporary environment what, though in one sense changeable and limited, is in another sense absolute. He is great, not as independent of his circumstances, not in spite of them, but through and by means of them. If it appears contradictory to say that the absolute is somehow embodied in the relative, the eternal in the temporary, I can only say that such an embodiment—we have called it Incarnation—appears to be the essence of finite individuality everywhere, though it differs vastly in degree from instance to instance. This is the source at once of the limitation and of the greatness of the individual soul. It is limited, an element in what is much greater than it; yet it also fulfils a real function in the whole, and it is that function which gives it its value and dignity. The formula, again, is the body and its members: each in the whole, and the whole in some measure in each. It is in terms of incorporate membership, and not of self-sufficient independence, that we must understand it. Moreover, the individual, in addition to being a necessary though subordinate element within the whole, knows that it is so: and that makes all the difference. It knows that it is already 'beyond itself'; to others, as with Jesus, when it is aware of this, it may at times seem even to be 'beside itself.' It is as embodying the whole in the temporary, to an extent perhaps without parallel, that we must understand the greatness of Jesus. But, if that is so, it must still be true in a measure that to us he will remain 'ever something strange and enigmatic.' We may reverence, even if we cannot always understand or follow: his goal may be our goal, but our way to it will not always be identical with his. Are the consequences of this admission serious? In the first place, we should remember that its truth is not affected by the seriousness of its consequences. And, in the second place, it will depend upon what we look to find in Jesus. If it is primarily the teacher, the consequences may be serious. But if it is the inspiration of a great personality, they will be less so. His standpoint and setting are not ours, and in part his thoughts cannot be. But his achievement, of reaching the kind of level he reached, can be both inspiration and example. Com-

prehend him fully I cannot, nor comprehend in the manner he did; but I can marvel at the extent of his comprehension, and seek, in my measure, to achieve it too.

Where, and in what degree, the standpoint is changed and his thought not ours it is not within the limits of my present purpose to enquire. But I will admit that, in the things of the spirit, we can perhaps exaggerate the extent to which one age is separated from another. It may be—why should it not be?—that Jesus perceived, in a way sufficiently deep and simple to be permanent, the main lines which a human life, to succeed, must always follow. And the understanding, which came from Him, that life is through self-surrender with a positive end, to the extent that good must always be born in travail, seems so well to fit the facts of our own world that it can hardly, for us, be other than permanent truth. Such an achievement on His part, gaining a clear-sighted optimism just where it had appeared least possible, may well mark a greater advance than all the noble or frivolous additions of later ages can claim to have produced. Nevertheless, the difference of environment remains, with its consequences. And in addition there must always be historical uncertainties. The so-called Christ-myth school, the best historians tell us with confidence, is no considerable danger. It seems to have set its doubts in the wrong place. That Jesus existed is not doubtful. What may be doubtful is what, in certain respects, he was like: what He really said, thought, or did. Here some considerable uncertainty is likely always to remain, though the extent of it is difficult to estimate. We may regret this, but if faith in Christian Incarnation is, as I have suggested, very widely based, we need not do more than deplore it: many great things are lost beyond *our* recovery.

But, for myself, I am prepared to go further. It is possible—can it be called otherwise?—that, when the intervening period has become sufficiently long, or (more important) the discontinuity in civilization sufficiently great, Jesus himself may come to mean less and less to the men of that distant age. His influence, of course, will not have vanished; but its source, perhaps, will no longer be recognized. And we may go further again. Can we say that it is impossible that, somewhere and sometime, there should live another man who would do as much for the world,

and be to it as much, even as Jesus? I see no ground on which it can be called impossible. But, here again, to estimate its probability lies beyond my present purpose. *In itself*, there is perhaps no great difficulty in supposing that the greatest product of a process has come, neither at the end, nor at the beginning. And it may be that first-century Palestine was a concatenation of circumstances of such a sort that others, equally favourable to the flowering of religion, are unlikely to occur. The *practical* question, no doubt, is whether what is greater has anywhere yet occurred; and about the answer to this question we may perhaps be in no doubt. And so long as this is true, the historicity of Jesus must remain of dominant importance for a doctrine of Incarnation. The theoretical question, however, has a real bearing upon our present beliefs, and it is for that reason that I have introduced it. Yet I admit that a possibility, if it is not sufficiently grounded in present experience to acquire some appreciable degree of probability, is an idle subject for speculation.²² It is only, I think, to a form of the idea of Incarnation which rests upon discontinuities, which is narrowly, and by consequence inconsistently, based that these admissions will seem, in any sense, to surrender what is central to a Christian position. I would add that an idea of Incarnation which rigidly limits it to one instance is, in its foundation and its consequence, sceptical and pessimistic, seeking in the abnormal what is found incredible of the normal. I would urge that at least it should be considered whether this is not true.

Some, however, will perhaps seek to turn the edge of these admissions. 'We admit,' it might be said, 'what you say: the future may produce what you suggest. But it would not be another; it would be Jesus come again, or rather, the Eternal Christ, still with us.' Well, in a sense, I can agree. I have not used that expression; indeed I have consciously avoided it. I do not for one moment doubt the experiences which produced it; and to appear in any way to limit the reverence—yes, and more than reverence—due to Jesus is altogether the reverse of

²² A mere possibility is, perhaps, self-contradictory. Such a mere possibility, at all events, even supposing it possible, would, strictly speaking, be wholly without interest, because wholly without relevance. A possibility acquires interest only (amongst other things) when it acquires relevance to present experience, *i.e.* when it acquires some degree of probability.

my desire. Yet I cannot but doubt the appropriateness, at least for some purposes, of the expression in question. So far, I grant, as Jesus is absolute—by which I mean so far as the absolute (call it what you will) is seen in Jesus—so far wherever the absolute appears it is Jesus. Wherever the absolute appears it is in a sense the same, and must be so: yet never the same wholly, for never wholly embodied. And the extent to which it is the same will vary; all Incarnation is a matter of degree, though not of the same degree. And I am doubtful whether it is appropriate to apply to one instance the name which belongs to another, especially when that name suggests its more temporary element. Hence we prefer, and rightly, the expression Eternal Christ to the expression Eternal Jesus. But, at all events, one thing is clear: if such an Incarnation were again to be, it would not be again the Great Figure of Galilee, for it would no longer be the world of Galilee. And on this matter I perhaps need say no more.

And what is the result of this discussion? (i) It has suggested that the fundamental question is not whether Incarnation implies the full reality of the historical process, but what measure of value and reality is implied in our finite world of fact and experience. (ii) It has suggested that it does not imply the full reality of this world, though it does imply the real worth and significance of all finite being; and that its significance consists in its function within the greater world of reality, rather than in its self-sufficiency or isolation. (iii) It has suggested that the idea of Incarnation must assign a dominant position to the life and person of Jesus, but that it does not imply his isolation or distinction from the world, but just the contrary. (iv) And, finally, it has suggested that the basis of the idea is very wide, just as its application is wide, and that the more it is narrowed the less significant and the more doubtful it becomes. Incarnation is intelligible to-day; but not intelligible if confined within the formulas given to it by councils and synods of ages long gone by. Our knowledge of truth may, or may not, increase as the world goes on; probably it does so; but at all events it changes its form. And just for this reason, as we saw at the outset, doctrinal forms cannot be immutable or axiomatic, but must move, like all things which would remain alive and whole.

THE JEWISH CONTRIBUTION TO CHRISTIANITY

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THE subject of this paper, the Jewish contribution to Christianity, is further defined in the introduction to the Conference programme 'as dealing with the Jewish contributions of Christianity in history, not simply in its origin, but in the Christian adoption of Jewish Scriptures, sacrificial concepts, Erastianism, etc.' Thus expanded, the subject will, I am afraid, with difficulty be kept within the period allowed.

The first place in the Christian heritage from Judaism must be given to the person of Jesus Himself. The corner-stone of the Christian fabric is the character, and the religious outlook of its Founder. The essential basis of our religion is, not so much a relation of men to Jesus, but the example of the relation of Jesus to God. And Jesus was born a Jew.

The pendulum of historical criticism has swung back from its first attempt to create, by suitable expurgations, a liberal Protestant Jesus of the nineteenth century. This modern attempt to divorce the religion of Jesus from its Jewish background is indeed as old as Marcion. Marcion, that prince of heretics and sincerest of Christians, refused to set the primitive legends of early Judaism on a level with the revelation in Jesus of the God of Love; he taught that Jesus revealed a new God, who was till then a stranger to the world, and who entered it to deliver men from the God of the Jews. In order to prove this drastic separation of Jesus from Judaism, Marcion had to adopt the premise that the Gospels and Epistles had been utterly falsified by Jewish correctors, a view all the more strange¹ since he accepted the historical inerrancy of the Old Testament. To-day we may perhaps agree with Marcion that St. Paul, at any

¹ Harnack, Marcion, p. 67. 'Marcion im A. T. keine Zeile änderte, ja den ganzen Text des weitschichtigen Buchs als unverfälschte Geschichte anerkannte.' Apelles, the one heretic as against Marcionite orthodoxy, rejected the infallibility of the O.T., and ascribed it to a fallen angel. *cf.* Harnack, p. 189.

rate in his arguments against Judaizers, has a new and different message from that of the Judaic Gospels; ²we cannot follow him in the resulting step, too drastic for honest criticism, of weeding out from the Gospels everything Judaic. The opposite extreme is expressed by Klausner, who in his recent book, *Jesus of Nazareth*, first published in Hebrew, gives a sympathetic and on the whole very fair presentation of the life of Jesus from the point of view of a modern Jew. ³Commenting on the verse, 'It is not meet to take the bread of the children and cast it to the dogs,' he says, 'Jesus in all His sayings and doings was an utter Jew.' ⁴Klausner further holds, that till the time of Trajan and Hadrian Jesus was regarded as a true Jew by the sages of Israel.

True, Jesus poured terrific scorn on the conventional Judaism of his contemporaries. His rejection by his people is an unanswerable proof of the difference of His religion and theirs. Still, even in His antagonism to the narrow spirit of Pharisaism, Jesus was true to the finer side of Judaism. In his desire for mercy and not sacrifice He stands in the tradition of the Jewish prophets. Moreover, other contemporary Jews realized that all was not well with the conventional religion of that time. Other Jews recognized that religious legalism easily degenerates into hypocrisy, and pointed a finger of scorn to the ⁵'tell me what is my obligation and I will do it' type of Pharisee.

With regard to the positive teaching of our Lord, it may well be true, as Klausner and Montefiore say, that ⁶'throughout the Gospels there is not one item of the ethical teaching which cannot be paralleled either in the Old Testament, and the Apocrypha, or in the Talmudic and Midrashic literature of the time of Jesus.' The true originality of Jesus lies, not in the propound-

² cf. *Legacy of Israel*, Burkitt, p. 73. 'There was a new element in the religion of Jesus, a new impulse, what men of the age called a new spirit; but it was not altogether a new spirit. Marcion denied this, but neither the Catholic Church nor the modern historian agrees with him.'

³ Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 294.

⁴ *op. cit.* p. 46.

⁵ Klausner, *op. cit.* p. 214: quoted as a Baraita, a tradition emanating from the Tannaim, the authorities of the first two centuries.

⁶ Klausner, *op. cit.* p. 384. cf. also Glover, *Conflict of Religions*, p. 116. 'As its opponents were quick to point out—and they still find a curious pleasure in re-discovering it—there was little new in Christian teaching. The Talmud, according to the modern Jew, contains a parallel to everything that Jesus said—(and how much else, adds Wellhausen).'

ing of new thoughts, but in the selection He made of all that was best in Judaism. His genius is seen in the simplicity of emphasis on all that was most fine in Judaism, and in the rejection of all less weighty matters of the law. His appeal is universal, just because He speaks with exceptional clarity, simple yet fundamental truths, which many others have spoken, and to which all men make assent. More particularly His difference from contemporary Jews, and a main cause of His rejection by His people, lay in the prophetic emphasis on morality, and⁷ the consequent eclipse of ceremonialism, as the demand of God from men. Moreover, in proclaiming the Father's will, He dared to resume after long disuse another feature of the mantle of the prophets; He spoke with authority, as from his own personal conviction,⁸ not as the scribes. He gave men the ever new wine, without troubling to hide it in the old bottles of past traditions.

The source of much of the inspiration of our Lord, and the second great contribution of Judaism to Christianity, is the Sacred Scriptures of Judaism, our Old Testament and Apocrypha. It is important to remember that the Bible of the Early Church was, however, the Septuagint, a version with important differences from the Hebrew Bible of the Jews. From the time of Jesus the Old Testament has provided unfailing inspiration for Christian piety; Lord Prothero, in his book *The Psalms in Human Life*, gives striking testimony to the influence of this book of the Old Testament. Less fortunately,¹⁰ from the time of St. Paul to our own day, the Scriptures have provided an inexhaustible battery for theological combatants. To quote a text has ever been to prove an argument. If the quotation wrests the text far away from its original context, this merely means

⁷ cf. Klausner, *op. cit.* p. 371. 'He so decries ceremonial laws, as to make them of secondary importance to moral laws, and almost to nullify them.'

⁸ Marcion would have us believe that Jesus never quoted from the O.T. at all. cf. Harnack, *op. cit.* p. 64.

¹⁰ cf. Weiss, *Das Ur Christentum*, p. 332. 'Für Paul ist durch das "Es steht geschrieben" jede Diskussion und jeder Einwand abgesehnt. . . . Vor allem wenn er sich um den Zusammenhang und die Originalbedeutung der betreffende Worte an ihre Stelle nicht zu kümmern pflegt, sondern sie nur in dem Sinne verwertet, der ihm gerade pab, so hat er damit kein gutes, leider ein nur allzu häufig geahmtes Beispiel gegeben.'

that the true sense was as yet hidden, and that the mantle of inspiration has fallen from the author, on to his newest and most ingenious interpreter. It is perhaps worth reminding ourselves that the example of the use and abuse of Scripture for textual warfare goes back behind St. Paul to the Tempter.

The value of the legacy of Scripture may be said in a paradox to vary inversely with the value ascribed to it. When the authority of the Old Testament has been regarded as verbal and absolute, its influence has been pernicious; when its infallibility is once for all rejected, then its true and real value is appreciated. Marcion, accepting the false premise of the inerrancy of the Old Testament, was justified on that basis in his magnificently drastic cleavage of the Old from the New. Except in his thoroughness, Marcion did not stand alone; the Fourth Gospel, though it allows that salvation is of the Jews, makes Jesus say, 'All that came before me were thieves and robbers';¹¹ the Epistle of Barnabas would have us believe that any who accept a literal interpretation of the Old Testament are inspired by Satan. The attempt thus to exalt the God of Love by isolating Him was magnificent but impossible; fortunately, as we see to-day, it was also unnecessary, for the discovery in the Old Testament of an evolution of the knowledge of God destroys the false premise of inerrancy. ¹²By a quaint historical paradox the heritage of the Old Testament, coupled with the belief in its infallibility, was the indirect cause of our possession of the New Testament; the Old Testament, by first provoking this drastic opposition from Marcion, led later to the authorization of a canonical New Testament, as Marcion in his turn was opposed by the Church. What would the history of Christendom have been, if, ¹³as perhaps nearly happened, Marcion had tri-

¹¹ Harnack, *op. cit.* p. 203.

¹² *cf.* Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 152. 'Bevor sich die große Christenheit in Nachfolge Marcion's das N.T. schuf, und so zwei angeblich harmonische Testamenten besaß, kannte die Marcionitische Kirche bereits zwei feindliche schriftliche Testamente.' p. 211 note, 'Das geschriebene N.T. ist als Gegner der A.T. von Marcion geschaffen worden, um dann erst, im Gegensatz zu ihm, in friedlicher Verbindung mit dem A.T. als die Oberstufe in der Katholischen Kirche zu erscheinen.'

¹³ Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 206 note. 'Es ist nicht ganz unmöglich daß im 2 Jahrhundert ein Jahrzehnt gegeben hat, in welchem die Christen welche das A.T. verwarfen, zahlreicher waren als die welche es anerkannten.'

umphed, and the New Testament had completely superseded the Old?

¹⁴The influence of this heritage from Judaism was felt with renewed force at the Reformation, when men turn for authoritative teaching from a corrupt Church to an infallible Bible. Calvin somewhere has written a slogan for Biblical fundamentalism, 'as nothing useful to salvation has been omitted, so there is nothing therein but what it is of importance to know.' The Anglican Articles make the Bible the prior authority to the Creeds. The judgment of J. R. Green is classical for this country; ¹⁵'No greater moral change ever passed over a nation than passed over England during the years which parted the middle of the reign of Elizabeth from the meeting of the Long Parliament. England became the people of a book, and that book was the Bible.' Under this revived influence of the Old Testament¹⁶ the Jewish theocracy served as a model for an Erastian State, and wars were waged at the behest of the Jewish Lord of Hosts. After the Reformation, the authority of the Old Testament was at its greatest, and the paradox was proved, that its value was least. Harnack writes,¹⁷ 'If Marcion had appeared again at the time of the Huguenots and of Oliver Cromwell, he would have met the Jewish God of War, whom he had rejected

¹⁴ cf. *Legacy of Israel*, Box, p. 343. 'The position too ascribed by the Reformers to the Bible itself marks a complete revolution. Instead of an infallible Church speaking with a divine authority through its head on earth, the Vicar of Christ, the accent is now on the Bible rather than the Church. Even where, as in the Anglican Communion, the historic continuity of the Church as a visible body is insisted on, the authority of the Holy Scripture is still paramount. The formula, the Church to teach, the Bible to prove, is typically Anglican.'

¹⁵ Quoted by Selbie, *Legacy of Israel*, p. 407.

¹⁶ *Legacy of Israel*, p. 391. 'The Doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings is not exclusively of Jewish origin. Wherever it appears independently of Judaism, it seems to take the form of a claim for descent from the Gods for the reigning family . . . Such doctrines of the divine right could hardly go hand in hand with Christianity. But the Jewish idea of the anointed of the Lord readily took its place, and has served as the literary defence of the kingship ever since.'

¹⁷ *op. cit.*, p. 220. cf. also Selbie of the Puritans, *Legacy of Israel*, p. 408. 'In the bitter experience of persecution and civil war they found in the O.T. in particular language and sentiments which exactly filled their mood and suited their occasion.' Also, p. 413, 'Puritans and Anglicans alike vied with each other in the bitterness of their vituperation, and both found in the O.T. vocabulary and weapons fitted to their hands.'

in horror, set in the heart of Christendom.' We may add that the resuscitation of Marcion would not have been much more happy, had he appeared so recently, as the second decade of the twentieth century.

Already, however, in Cromwell's time there are signs of better things. There was beginning in England the *Aufklärung*, which was to lead to the historical criticism of the Bible, to the rejection of its infallibility, and to the discovery in it of the long progression from primitive myth to Jewish and Christian monotheism. The history of the Deist movement shows how amazingly late in origin was the modern conception of evolution, which, by destroying the false premise of the even infallibility of the Bible, solves Marcion's problems. ¹⁸Among the first Deists, and especially Thomas Morgan, Harnack traces a parallel to Marcion's complete rejection of the Old Testament. To-day the *Aufklärung* has run its course, and for more than a century the primitive origin of many Old Testament documents, and the consequent low level of their religious and ethical views, has been recognized by scholars. I would echo Harnack's urgent plea, that the consequent rejection of the Old Testament as an authoritative Christian source should receive official ecclesiastical recognition. He writes with justice :

¹⁹ 'The greater part of the present antagonism of laymen to Christianity, and to the truth of the Church's message, comes from the respect still paid by the Church to the O.T. The Protestant Churches should officially recognise that the O.T., though good and useful to be read, has no authority for the Christian conscience.'

When the authority of the Old Testament is thus rejected, then the other side of the paradox is true, for the real value of this heritage from Judaism is discovered. It is supremely valuable, when criticism has performed its task of dating and arranging the documents, as a record of development, on the one side of the growth of the knowledge of God, on the other side of the unfolding of the Divine Purpose. When this has been done it may prove a useful instrument for religious education. It is not too fanciful to suggest that the mind of a child, like its body, recapitulates the history of the race; before a child can under-

¹⁸ *op. cit.*, p. 221.

¹⁹ A somewhat free summary of *op. cit.*, p. 222. *cf.* also p. 217. 'Es aber seit dem XIX Jahrhundert als kanonische Urkunde im Protestantismus noch zu konservieren ist die Folge einer religiösen und kirchliche Lähmung.'

stand that God is Spirit, it thinks of Him, as did the Hebrew race in their infancy, as a Man talking to men. In this way, to-day as in the early Church, ²⁰the Old Testament may still serve as a bridge to lead to the New.

Further, since Jesus was a Jew, the Old Testament will ever be necessary for the understanding of the New. There Jesus discovered inspiration, and there we may learn to interpret and even to supplement his words. Harnack surely goes too far, when he says, ²¹*'Was christlich ist kann man aus dem alte Testamente nicht ersehen'*; 'It is not there that the essentials of Christianity are to be found.' Here lies the fallacy of the German Protestant Christ, divorced from history. If, reading the Old Testament, we have eyes to discern the peak from the plain, then we may find inspiration there as did the Master.

The heritage of the Old Testament has these values. It is not to be discarded, though it may be suggested that for the service of Christian piety it is singularly ill-adapted in its present form. The Church should have the courage to create anew its Bible. Large sections of the Old Testament might well, as Marcion thought, be rejected. Large sections will no less be retained for their own intrinsic merit. Some sections would be preserved, set out in their order of origin, to show the growth of the knowledge of God. Other sections will have a place, because they show the special sources of the inspiration of Jesus, and serve as it were as a commentary on the New Testament. To such a Bible there might well be added extracts from the historical documents of the other world religions, which have been their schoolmasters to bring them to Christ.²² In such a form, the Jewish heritage would attain its right proportion, its true and very real influence and value.

²⁰ Harnack, *Mission and Expansion of Christianity*, Vol. I, p. 281, quotes in illustration Tatian Orat. XXIX: 'When I was paying earnest heed to what was profitable, some barbarous writings came into my hands, which were too bold for Greek ideas and too divine for Greek errors. These I was led to trust . . .' cf. Also Harnack, Marcion, p. 9: 'Evangelio non crederem nisi me commoveret auctoritas Veteris Testamenti, unzweifelhaft das Bekenntnis zahlreicher Christen der ältesten Zeit.' I do not suggest that we should teach children the lower ethical views, but only the more concrete pictures of the O.T.

²¹ Harnack, *Marcion*, p. 223.

²² If it were practicable, since inspiration did not end with *II Peter*, there might well be added an anthology of later Christian writings.

We now turn to a closer study of some of the elements within the heritage of the Old Testament and of the Religion of Jesus. The next and most important question is, to what extent, and with what value the Christian conception of God is Judaic in origin. Popular orthodoxy has never yet been true to the full meaning of the doctrine of the Incarnation. Still, to-day people keep a God like Jehovah distinct from Christ. People set up Christ as a second God, and fail to interpret God in terms of Christ. The long and dreary history of theories of the Atonement bears evidence to the belief in a God, less noble, less loving than His Son; Christ is called in to make things right with an unChristlike God. The conception of a Love Divine, that transcends justice, transcends honour, transcends petty legalism, has always seemed too good to be true.

There is no doubt that to the Old Testament must be ascribed much of this belief in a Divine Power of low ethical quality. There is in the Old Testament a God who is glad to have front seats at the slaughter of Agag. There is what Adam Smith calls in fine phrase 'a delirium of conscience produced by a famine of justice.' The service of such a God has often produced an excuse for an unChristian pursuit of war.

The blame for this debased thought of God must of course rest on Christians rather than Jews. From a modern historical point of view, it is natural to us that the Jews, at an early stage in their history, should have had a less noble view; it is a profane abuse of this heritage for Christians to set this primitive view on an equality with the character and teaching of Jesus. The task lies urgently on us of rooting out from the modern Christian consciousness anything which suggests a God less noble in character than Jesus. If only to provide the one sure basis for peace on earth, we must teach men to serve and worship the God of Love in heaven. The plea of Marcion needs constant repetition;²⁴ 'Alles übrige ist streng auszuschneiden. Gott ist nicht der Schöpfer, nicht der Gesetzgeber, nicht der Richter, er zürnt und straft auch nicht, sondern er ist ausschliesslich die verkörperte, erlösende und beseligende Liebe.'

These pictures of a God of war and vengeance are, however,

²⁴ Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 19. 'Everything else must be firmly set aside. God is not the Creator, not the Law-giver, not the Judge, he is not angry and does not punish; he is simply and solely Incarnate, Redemptive, Sanctifying Love.'

incidental, and it is not fair to judge the Jewish heritage by them. If at one end of the scale the Lord of the early Jewish tribes is so far removed from Jesus, as to justify Marcion's sharp dualism, at the other end their conception comes very near to that of Jesus Himself. ²⁵In His approach to God as Father, Jesus is a Jew, true to the best traditions of Judaism. The Jewish background may still serve to correct Christian thought of the Love of God. The Old Testament may save us from sentimentalism by reminding us that the Love of God is, as I have heard Dr. Selbie say, a stark thing, rigorous in its demands. Jewish universalism may save us from a not infrequent narrowness in Christian thought of the Father; of sonship Jesus was no doubt conscious in a unique degree; but the Fatherhood of God was not confined to Him, but was wide enough to embrace creation.

There is another aspect of the Jewish conception of God, which provides a contribution to Christianity from which we have still much to learn. Jehovah is a God, self-revealing, active in history, a God with a purpose to fulfil, Who works for its fulfilment. This is the meaning of the Jewish phrase, strange if we dwell on it, which describes Jehovah as the living God. This thought of the activity of God is vital, and far outweighs the disastrous misuse of primitive Jewish ideas as to the nature of that purpose and activity. I agree with Dr. Rawlinson when he writes in his recent lectures, ²⁶ 'What is really at stake in the modern discussion of Christianity is the validity of the essentially Jewish faith,' the faith we may add of Jesus ²⁷ and no less of St. Paul, 'in the living God, active in history, concretely real and personal, the Creator of the ends of the earth.' ²⁸ This

²⁵ cf. Klausner, *op. cit.*, p. 378. 'Jesus undoubtedly uses the term Father in the same sense in which it is used in the Talmudic literature, etc.'

²⁶ *The New Testament Doctrine of the Christ*, p. 226.

²⁷ cf. Sabatier, *Paul*, p. 33. 'Le Dieu de Paul est celui de l'ancienne alliance. C'est le Dieu unique et jaloux, le Createur absolu de l'univers, qui donne a connaître dans ses ouvrages les caractères de sa divinité; il est le seul Dieu vivant et vrai.'

²⁸ cf. Rawlinson, *Essays on Trinity and Incarnation*, p. 16. 'The contrast between the static Absolute of much Graeco-Europæan philosophy and the dynamically active Deity of Hebrew and Christian religious belief has been sharply insisted on by L. Laberthonnière in his book, *Le Réalisme Chrétien et l'Idéalisme Grec*.' . . . The one type of doctrine issues logically in a religious mysticism transcending time and change, the other points rather to a religious interpretation of the significance of events in time, a

Jewish faith stands in sharp contrast to the philosophical conception of the Absolute, which threatens to eclipse it. The one leads to a religion of naïve prayer and worship, the other leads to a religion of a mystical absorption in the Ideal. Heiler, weighing the merits of the two types of religion, concludes that the philosophical, mystical reinterpretation of prayer is a modern sophistry; that the last and noblest form of religion is the first and simplest, a direct childlike approach to God as Father. The belief in the Divine Initiative is central for Christian as for Jewish faith; if it be lost in a static Absolute, the basis of Christian faith and hope may be found to have been cut away. The static conception is more easily adopted to a rationalistic world outlook; it may none the less prove destructive of a spiritual outlook. The reign of natural law, and the sum total of moral idealism are ascribed to God, till they come to embrace the whole Being of God, and we have finally, in fact, like Laplace, no need for the hypothesis of God at all. Pantheism is Atheism; a God who always works by law is indistinguishable from a God who never works at all. Hence it is that Modernists to-day are sometimes accused of believing in a God who does nothing. As against this the Jewish faith in a dynamic God deserves at least serious reconsideration. Is it after all really incompatible with a sane rationalism? The trend of modern philosophy is away from Absolute Idealism, the static, mystical view to Emergent Evolution. The modern view of the *Élan Vital*, and of Evolution as spontaneous and free, has close affinities with the Jewish view of God, active in creation. It is interesting to notice that there is a direct, historical Jewish influence in this modern philosophical movement. Maimonides, the Jewish precursor of the Renaissance, probably had considerable influence on the great Jewish philosopher of modern times, Spinoza; to Spinoza²⁹ Lloyd Morgan, the exponent of modern philosophy of history from a religious point of view. The Hebrew outlook is primarily religious and not speculative, prophetic and not philosophical.'

²⁹ *Life, Mind and Spirit*, p. 249. 'In the distinction I draw between the two stories I do but echo Spinoza. For me, as for him, substance thinking and substance extended are one and the same substance, comprehended now through one attribute and now through the other.' A saying of Spinoza, quoted by Roth, *Legacy of Israel*, p. 441, is interesting as linking the philosophic theory with the religious outlook: 'Some begin from created things, and some from the human mind; I begin from God.'

evolutionary philosophy, avows his indebtedness. Philosophical speculation is again finding a place for a God, active, self-revealing, creative in history. Christian piety may still have much to learn from Judaism, which of all nations was most conscious of the activity of God, both in personal experience and in the history of the nation.

The truth seems to be that we must combine the two conceptions of time, as other speakers have already suggested. A God who is static, outside the world process, is no God because He does nothing. A God, dynamic, active as the Jews thought, would be not worth worshipping, if He was exhausted in the time process. Fortunately, as Mr. Boys-Smith pointed out, it is this clear-cut antithesis which is itself illusory. The Eternal is, as the Jews thought, active in time, as we should say, immanent in the creative process.

The next Jewish contribution which I propose to treat is one so obvious that it easily escapes notice. From Judaism there comes to Christian thought the first form of thought about Jesus, the first Christology, that which indeed gives the name to all Christologies and to Christians, that form of thought which alone of all Christologies can with certainty be ascribed to our Lord Himself. Jesus was in the first instance not the Second Person of the Trinity, nor on the other hand a mere ethical reformer; to Himself and to His first followers He was the Christ, the Coming One, the Son of Man, the long-expected Messiah. Possibly from Judaism comes too the later *logos* Christology, better adapted to the mind of the Greek world; but the extent of the influence of Philo and of the Wisdom literature on later Christological theory is too big a theme to be treated here.

Jesus grew to manhood in an atmosphere filled with a variety of written and unwritten hopes, assuming many strange forms, yet all agreeing in pointing to the coming of a great Deliverer. Only against this background can we understand his career. The use that He made of these hopes, the selection of all that was most fine, shows more than anything else His profound originality.³⁰ In the allegorical account of the Temptation, He

³⁰ cf. The Account of the Temptation in Seeley's *Ecce Homo*; also Klausner, *op. cit.*, p. 253, and Weiss, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

must later have explained to his disciples how at the outset of His ministry He sifted the rough ore of Messianic belief. The positive elements in the belief He accepted, as pointing to His own divine vocation; by thus focussing them on Himself, He handed them on to Christendom in transmuted form. Was the Messiah to come as Warrior, as a second David, founding again the Jewish Kingdom? A Kingdom there should indeed be, though of a different order, when men would repent and let Love Divine reign in their hearts. Was the Messiah to be the supernatural Son of Man, breaking into the world in a sudden cataclysm, calling into being a new world to redress the balance of the old? The Kingdom which Jesus proclaimed was on this world, but not of this world; only when men learnt to set their affections on things above would they acquire in this world the treasures that endure. ³¹In the Wisdom Literature there is a gentler call of Wisdom to all that desire her; the Christ should call the weary and heavy-laden, that in His service their souls might find their true rest. Was there in all the Scriptures one prophecy of a Messiah who should come, not in regal splendour but in humility, not in war but in peace? Jesus first publicly proclaimed his Messiahship by the enacted parable of the entry into Jerusalem, recalling for those who had eyes to see this prophecy of Zechariah.³² But a love that is real must be strong to endure suffering; only by bearing upon itself the consequences of blindness and sin, by steadfastly meeting hate with love, can it open men's eyes to love and redeem them from sin. Jesus almost certainly for the first time gave a Messianic interpretation to the peak of Old Testament literature, the Songs of the Suffering Servant. Here most of all He showed the originality of His own Messianic interpretation, and by opposing all conventions

³¹ cf. Weiss, *op. cit.*, p. 93. He quotes Eccl. LI 23, 26, 27, and XXIV, 19 fol., and says: 'Wenn nun Jesus in ähnlichen Worten die Mühseligen und Beladenen zu sich ruft, unter sein Joch, und ihnen Erquickung für ihre Seelen verheißt, so wird dies damalige Hörer und Leser gewiß an die 'Weisheit' erinnern haben.'

³² cf. Klausner on the foretelling by Jesus of his sufferings and death, at Caesarea Philippi, *op. cit.*, p. 300. 'To deny this would make the whole history of Christianity incomprehensible. If after the Crucifixion the disciples believed in a suffering Messiah, then Jesus must, while still alive, have spoken of such sufferings. cf. Also p. 302: 'But for the conviction that Jesus foresaw his dreadful death, no Jewish disciples could have accepted a crucified Messiah.'

voluntarily incurred His rejection and crucifixion by His people. Christ crucified, this was to the Jews a stumbling-block, then, and in St. Paul's time and to this day.

And to the Greeks it was foolishness. What meaning had or has this first Christology for Gentiles, untrained in the long record of Jewish prophecy, whence it drew its whole meaning? To how many Christians to-day is Christ more than the proper name of Jesus? ³³ Marcion thought that the God of Love was unknown before Jesus, and agreed with the Jews that a warrior Messiah was still to come. We should lose much if we followed his example and rejected the Jewish legacy of Messianic thought in its application to Jesus; for, rightly understood, it may be of all the Christologies still the most reasonable, the most inspiring, the most decisive. It is indeed to-day impossible to believe in prophecy in the sense of an exact foretelling of future events, if only because of the necessary corollary of rigid determinism. The Jews had not in fact, as they supposed, windows into the courts of heaven through which to see the pre-existent Son of Man, who was to descend to earth. Inspiration, not prediction, was the gift of the prophet and apocalypticist. The Jews were, however, inspired by the prophets, who used this form of apocalyptic expectation, with the hope of a better day coming, the conviction that God would in the end reveal Himself in righteousness; and we believe that Jesus, though in a way which they did not expect, truly fulfilled this hope. It is for the hope of Israel that Paul finds himself bound with chains. Here lies for us the meaning of the Messiahship. As Dr. Rawlinson writes, ³⁴ 'The argument from prophecy depends rather upon the broad relation of Christianity to Judaism as a religion of fulfilment to a religion of hope.' Two thoughts are implied. ³⁵ First, there is the profound ethical truth that in Jesus we see the true fulfilment of a nation's hopes; the goal for

³³ Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

³⁴ *op. cit.*, p. 18.

³⁵ *cf.* Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, p. 8. 'To affirm the Messiahship of Jesus is to assert that this particular historical personage, Jesus of Nazareth, a first century Jew, was of ultimate significance for mankind; it was to affirm by implication the validity of Israel's religious hope, and it was to assert that through this particular person the hope of Israel was destined to be fulfilled.'

nation and individual is, not martial triumph, not a display of power, but only love, strong to endure suffering in the service of humanity. Christ crucified: there Christians see both the strength of the Love of God, and the pattern of the Love which He requires of His children.³⁶ Further, belief that Jesus is Christ implies that a new era has come, that God is already in a sense reigning. The hope that the Messiah would come was justified by His coming; the hopes for His final triumph over the powers of evil therein receives new strength. The Love Divine can and shall reign on earth, for the Love of God has already been seen on earth. The first article of the faith of the early Church was the belief, borrowed from Judaism, that Jesus is the Christ. It was denied by Jews then; it is denied by Jews now; nevertheless it remains the first article of the faith of Christendom.

The separation of the life from the death of Jesus, and the interpretation of the Cross in Jewish terms as an expiatory sacrifice, is a theme to be mentioned and left for further development. To me it seems that propitiation, expiation, satisfaction have no place whatever in modern theology. Such terms rest on the false premise of an un-Christlike God. Quite recently I heard a sermon on the naïvely un-Christian theme that we should emphasize the justice of God, rather than His love, because by so doing we can preserve the good old words, redemption and propitiation. This is the *damnosa hereditas* of Judaism to Christianity. A full belief in the Incarnation renders any sacrificial theory of the Atonement unnecessary. The Cross does not create the love of God; it reveals it. The Cross reveals a love which bears attack, which takes upon itself without complaint the results of the sins of others, which refuses to meet force with force, but to the last appeals only to love. Such a love must ultimately disarm opposition, and redeem men from sin by opening their eyes to the appeal of goodness. This is

³⁶ cf. Weiss, *op. cit.*, p. 25. 'So ist die messianische Hoffnung der alten Gemeinde doch einen gewaltigen Schritt über die des Judentum's hinausgekommen; für sie hat der neue Äon schon begonnen, wenn auch seine Vollendung noch aussteht.' And p. 24: 'Aber bei ihnen hat die Erwartung einen andern Ton als bei den Juden. Freudiger, gewisser, ich möchte sagen aktueller klingt bei ihnen die Bitte, Dein Reich komme.'

the meaning of the redemptive power of the Cross; in this form the ministry of reconciliation is a permanent function of the Church.

St. Paul, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and a long succession of later theologians developed the metaphor of redemption, and added to it conceptions of sacrifice borrowed from a primitive stage of Jewish religion; in so doing they carried Christian thought far away from the simple nobility of the Gospel of Jesus. In rejecting crude theories of atonement and propitiation, we may well learn a lesson from a modern Jew. Montefiori writes :

³⁷ 'The object of the death of Christ for Matthew is the forgiveness of the sins of many. It is odd that round Jesus, who was so prophetic a teacher, these old superstitions should quickly have clustered. The atoning efficacy of the blood of Jesus has been believed in by millions for centuries. Without shedding of blood, says the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, there is no remission. One feels that Jesus would have repudiated such a doctrine with scorn. Judaism, after the fall of the Temple, had no need or use for any doctrine about Atonement or forgiveness being secured by blood. Matthew seems to have held that it was the blood of Jesus, his actual death, which made God forgive the sins of those who believed in his mission, Messiahship, and sonship. A strange doctrine. How much purer is the doctrine of Jesus and of Rabbinic Judaism. All God needs is repentance and amendment.'

Another contribution of Judaism, and one which constitutes a vital issue in Christian thought to-day, lies in the realm of eschatology. There is little doubt that the Founder of Christianity was deeply influenced by Jewish apocalyptic Messianism.

³⁸ It is tolerably certain that the Jewish apocalyptic books were well known, both to Him and to His hearers; ³⁹ and many phrases in the Gospels are only understood when interpreted in the light of these writings. The phrase, 'Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come,' could not have been invented, for it was already proved false when it was written down; and in such a connection the Son of

³⁷ *Commentary on the Gospels*, Vol. II, p. 331.

³⁸ cf. Charles, *Schweich Lectures on the Apocalypse*, p. 71. 'Galilee was the home of Jewish mystics and seers, as we infer from I Enoch, and the Testament of the XII Patriarchs.'

³⁹ cf. Burkitt, *Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, p. 21. 'It is when you study Matthew, Mark and Luke against the background of the books of Enoch that you see them in their true perspective.'

Man must be used in the same sense as in the Book of Enoch. Some misunderstanding, some heightening of the apocalyptic element from Proto-Luke or 'Q' to Matthew, there may have been. The Marcion-like attempt to weed out all Jewish eschatology from the Gospels can only appear to be special pleading, influenced by the desire to fit the Saviour into a twentieth century frame. The truth seems to me to be that Jesus, in common with other Jews, expected in the near future the end of the world and the sudden founding of a new kingdom. In any case, if it did not come from Jesus, this eschatological expectation, derived from Judaism, and perhaps earlier from Zoroastrianism, is found in the Christian community immediately after the death of Christ. It probably influenced the unfortunate experiment in communism of the Jerusalem saints. It was held by St. Paul, though with a waning influence in his later Epistles. In its main features the Jewish belief was carried on into later Christianity. Origen quotes from Papias a purely Jewish picture of the Millennium; ⁴⁰ Tertullian, in a passage quoted by Dr. Burkitt, accepts the prophecies of Enoch as referring to Christ. ⁴¹ The vision of a future judgment, again a purely Jewish conception, has survived down the ages. We hear echoes of a purely Jewish creed in that gloomy modern slogan, 'Millions now living will never die.' Popular religion is still disturbed by vague hopes and fears of the coming of the end of the world, and Jewish eschatology forms the main plank of the platform of a variety of English and American sects.

The survival of Jewish apocalyptic may bring occasional benefit to a seaside resort where the newest and most fashionable false prophet is voicing his cry. It is difficult to see that it serves any other useful purpose. The belief in eternal damnation has debased the Christian conception of God, and proved an occasion of stumbling to sincere Christians. Dr. Charles writes of this legacy of Judaism :

⁴⁰ *op. cit.*, p. 10. 'Tertullian, having remarked that he knows the Scripture of Enoch is not received by some on the ground that it is not admitted into the Jewish collection, goes on to say, "Since Enoch in the same scripture also predicted concerning the Lord, by us Christians the view is not at all to be rejected that it does concern us."'

⁴¹ Burkitt, *op. cit.*, p. 3. 'One thing appears to me quite certain. It seems to be certain that the doctrine of a future general assize held no place in the Graeco-Roman world apart from the beliefs of Jews and Christians.'

⁴² 'The doctrine of eternal damnation is a Judaic survival of a still more grossly immoral character. We shall do no more here than point out that this doctrine originated in Judaism, when monotheism had become a lifeless dogma, and Jewish particularism reigned supreme; and when a handful of the pious could not only comfortably believe that God was the God of the Jews alone, and only a very few of them, but also could imagine that part of their highest bliss in the next world would consist in witnessing the tortures of the damned.'

The progress of social reform, though forwarded by the inspiration of the ethical religion of the Jewish prophets, has been deterred by the influence of the apocalyptic, with their expectation of an imminent end of this world order. ⁴³ The *Modern Churchman* recently quoted from a correspondence in the *Guardian* the belief, quaint if it were not tragic, that the League of Nations is a pernicious institution, because by stopping wars and rumours of wars it would prevent the ensuing Second Coming.

The Church must unite to reject the legacy of the apocalyptic school. There is no eternal damnation; such a belief is quite incompatible with the revelation in Christ of a God of Love. There is no future Grand Assize; we accept the modernization of this belief, a modernization which is after all as old as the Fourth Gospel, that 'this is the judgment, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light.' There is no reason to expect a return to earth of Jesus in the clouds of heaven; the spirit of Christ comes again, wherever and whenever men turn to Him and let His spirit of Love reign in their hearts. I should agree with Mr. Boys-Smith in both his statements, that another Christ may come, and that we should not be justified in using of Him the name Jesus. Should He come, it would be, not in a cataclysm, but, like Jesus, in a natural way as the Child of his time. The probable duration of the world exceeds imagination, as does the present length of its existence.

What, then, of the eschatological teaching of Jesus? It can of course be argued that these Jewish beliefs came into the Church through the disciples, and not through the teaching of our Lord. If Jesus was Himself responsible for this teaching in primitive Christianity, as many eminent scholars hold to-day, then we must admit that He was mistaken in the form of His

⁴² *Eschatology, Hebrew, Jewish and Christian*, p. 367.

⁴³ *Modern Churchman*, Jan., 1926, 'Signs of the Times.'

eschatological teaching, though still profoundly true in the spirit in which He used that form. Our Lord accepted, as it seems to me, the contemporary Jewish belief in the imminent end of this world order; events soon proved Him mistaken; in any case, He had Himself confessed ignorance, for of that hour knoweth no one, neither the Son. He was wrong in accepting as literal fact the dramatization of the future as a sudden cataclysmic judgment. We reject to-day the drama; in so doing we neglect at our peril the real lessons which Jesus taught with the drama, that there is a Spiritual Kingdom to be attained on earth, that Truth and Goodness are not a passing phase of life on earth but belong to an eternal world, "that to attain salvation men must live in this world as not of this world. Rejecting the drama of the Second Coming, we shall not, it is to be hoped, lose "the faith that inspired the Jewish apocalyptic, the assurance that, however dark the day, in the end God would triumph. Finally, and this is all-important, the rejection of the belief in the coming end of the world does not at all affect the validity of Christ's ethical teaching. "Jesus did not leave, as Dr. Schweitzer and others would suggest, only an *Interims-ethik*. The ethic of the interim is for Christ the same as the ethic of the Kingdom; only thus can we account for the other side of His apocalyptic teaching, that men in this age are not far from the

⁴⁴ cf. Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, p. 35 note. 'The first Christians lived in this world as not belonging to it, because their true life was in the Age to Come. Later Christians, in so far as they were true to Christianity, lived in this world as not belonging to it, inasmuch as their true life was rooted in the sphere of the things unseen and eternal, hid with Christ in God.'

⁴⁵ Burkitt, *op. cit.*, p. 16, writes of the Apocalypses: 'We read them with sympathy when we think, not only of the great movement which they heralded, but also of the unconquerable hope in the future which they testify. We study the Apocalypses to learn how our spiritual ancestors hoped against hope that God would make all right in the end; and that we their children are here to-day studying them is an indication that their hope was not wholly unfounded.' Burkitt says of Enoch in particular, p. 33, 'His guiding star is a belief that the confused drama of history is not without a purpose, and that in the end the Judge of all the Earth can and will do right.'

⁴⁶ cf. Klausner, *op. cit.*, p. 405. 'Had it not been for this conviction of the nearness of the Days of the Messiah, and the fulfilment of the Days, he could not have put forward that extremist ethic and self-abnegation, which he taught in many of his parables and sayings.' Schweitzer holds that just because the Messiah did not return, every age becomes an Interim; the ethic does therefore for him endure.

Kingdom, that the Kingdom is already in their midst. Perfect self-sacrificing love, this is for Christ both the condition of men entering the Kingdom and also the characteristic of the Kingdom, when it comes. The drama is rationalized by saying that love is the condition of the Kingdom, not when it comes, but as it comes. The ethic remains in full force for men in this world, although the formal belief in the cataclysmic end of the world is abandoned.

There is another sphere of Jewish influence in regard to Jewish and Christian worship; to this we can give little more than a pointer for further study. On the Christian Sacraments the influence of Judaism is not very great. ⁴⁷ Dr. Burkitt makes the somewhat extreme statement, 'The Christian Sacraments are certainly not part of the inheritance taken from Judaism; they are not derived from the Temple worship nor, except in certain minor details, from the service of the synagogue.' ⁴⁸ As St. Paul set an end to legalism in the sphere of conduct, so the writer of the *Epistle to the Hebrews* set an end to ceremonial legalism by the theory that the Temple sacrifices were superseded by the sacrificial death of Christ. The contribution of Judaism to the Sacrament of the Last Supper depends upon the question, too large to be discussed here, whether or not the original Last Supper was the Passover meal. ⁴⁹ Canon Streeter on textual evidence concludes: 'The words in *Luke* suggest, though they do not quite compel the view, that in his source the Last Supper was conceived as taking place on the day before the Passover.' ⁵⁰ Lietzmann argues from the omission of the

⁴⁷ *Legacy of Israel*, p. 71.

⁴⁸ cf. Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, p. 179. The writer of *Hebrews* in effect may be said to have done for the Law upon its sacrificial side, that is to say as a divinely enjoined system of worship, what St. Paul had done for the Law as a system of commands and injunctions regulating everyday life; he at once powerfully vindicated its place in the O.T. and at the same time provided a theoretical justification of the fact that it had been in practice abandoned, by exhibiting its fulfilment in Christ.' ⁴⁹ *Four Gospels*, p. 423.

⁵⁰ Lietzmann, *Das Abendmahl*, p. 209. 'Vergleichen wir nun mit diesem aus Talmudischen Quellen gewonnenen Bild der jüdischen Festmahlzeit die bei Hippolyt erhaltene Beschreibung der Christlichen Agapae. Wir sehen sofort das die entscheidende Züge völlig dieselben sind.' Lietzmann holds that the Eucharist was a Pauline development, forming at first a constituent part of the Agapae; the Agapae was celebrated by the Jerusalem community, in memory, not of the Last Supper, but of the ordinary meals with the Master in his lifetime.

liturgical blessings and the four cups in the account, that it was not the Passover; according to him, however, in the early Christian liturgy, if there is no dependence on the Jewish synagogue or temple, there is a close connection with the ceremonial blessings at the Jewish festival meal, the Sabbath kiddush.⁵¹ Klausner, on the other hand, supplies the omissions in the narrative; and he has the most convincing solution of the problem of the dates, namely, that Jesus and His disciples followed the Jewish practice of that time in celebrating the Passover a day early, on the Thursday, to avoid breaking the Sabbath by killing the victim on the Friday evening. We would end, as does Montefiori, with agnosticism:

⁵² 'We cannot be sure of the day on which the Last Supper was held, or on which Jesus was crucified. While we cannot be sure of the relation of either to the Passover, yet the last meal and its solemnity are doubtless historic.'

For the influence of Judaism on Christian worship, it is to the synagogue and its services rather than to the Temple that we must look. The use of the Psalter, the reading of Lessons from the Bible, the homily, liturgical phrases such as the *Gloria*, the *Pax Vobiscum* and the *Amen*, the separation of men and women and the covering of the head by women, all these are Christian customs and uses which have their parallel in the earlier Jewish worship of the synagogue.

It is impossible to cover the whole field of Jewish influence in the time; I can only give a quick summary of one or two remaining points of lesser importance. The Jewish system of priesthood was of influence in the growth of the Christian ministry; ⁵⁴ on the example of the synagogue, elders were chosen by the Early Church; the later threefold division of the ministry rests on Jewish models; ⁵⁵ for Cyprian, the bishop is the successor of the sacrificing priest, the presbyterate is the Levitic tribe. ⁵⁶ To Judaism, too, we owe the fixing of the Christian

⁵¹ *op. cit.*, p. 326, 328.

⁵² *Synoptic Gospels*, Vol i, p. 328.

⁵⁴ *cf.* Weiss, *op. cit.*, p. 35. 'Immerhin wird es nicht lange gedauert haben, bis die Gemeinde sich nach dem Vorbilde der jüdischen Synagogenvereinigungen 'Älteste' als Leiter und Vertreter ihrer Anerlegenschaften gewählt hat.'

⁵⁵ *cf.* Archbishop Benson, *Cyprian*, p. 33 and 34.

⁵⁶ Oesterley and Box, *The Religion and Worship of the Synagogue*, p. 354.

feasts of Easter and Pentecost. ⁵⁷ From the Jewish doctrine that the merits of the Patriarchs were a general possession of the whole people of Israel, comes the Christian theory of the Treasury of Merits. The heroes of the Maccabaeen persecutions set the standard for Christian martyrs, and taught the Church the saving merit of a martyr's death.

We have dealt fairly closely with the varied contributions of Judaism to the Christian religion; ⁵⁸ there would lie a wide field for further study in the general contributions of Judaism to Christian culture. There is, for example, the influence of the Old Testament on Western legal systems. To Judaism we owe the prohibited degrees of affinity for marriage. Less fortunate is the use by Blackstone of Old Testament authority for the burning of witches. Such examples as this of the influence of the Jewish legal codes provoke from Nathan the dry comment that it tempts one to take the side of those Rabbis who opposed the teaching of Torah to the Gentiles. On broader lines the principle of the equality of all men before the law can doubtless be traced back to Christian influence, and further back to the Hebrew law, 'Ye shall not respect persons in judgment, ye shall hear both great and small alike.'

⁵⁹ In another sphere, a whole new field of research is suggested by a remark of Professor Marshall: 'In every country, and especially in Germany, much of what is most brilliant and suggestive in economic practice and in economic thought is of Jewish origin.'

The debt of Christendom to Jewish learning is considerable, especially in the early phases of the Renaissance. Singer writes that it was largely owing to Jewish teaching that Aristotelian thought could be accommodated to Biblical doctrine. Maimonides, in the early days of the Renaissance, maintained that revealed religion should be tested by rational enquiry; at the same time he taught, as against Averroes and against Aristotle,

⁵⁷ cf. Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, p. 331.

⁵⁸ cf. *Legacy of Israel*, passim.

⁵⁹ *Principles of Economics*, p. 753. cf. as one instance, Nathan Isaacs, *Legacy of Israel*, p. 397. 'It is generally conceded, though there are gaps in the evidence, that negotiable paper money was introduced into Europe by Jewish money lenders.'

that the world was created from nothing; he thus resisted mechanism, and found a place in his system for free-will, miracle and the efficacy of prayer.

I have left to the end one theme, which marks a dividing line between Judaism and Christianity, namely, the contrast between Judaism as the religion of a particular race or nation, and Christianity as a universal religion, sending her missionaries to every people of the world. For a short time the Jewish nation realized their missionary responsibility as the Chosen People; they left to Christianity the inspiration of the allegory of Jonah, and the portrait of the Servant, suffering that he might be a light to the Gentiles. In some respects our inheritance from Judaism has proved detrimental to Christian missionary work. The idolizing veneration for the Old Testament has sometimes blinded missionaries, and still more missionary societies, to the good in other religions. It is one of the advantages of historical criticism that it may enable the Church to form a more just estimate of the relative merits of our Old Testament and of the great world religions. Doubtless, had Christ been born in China, He would have seen in the works of Confucius the Old Testament of the Chinese. In the early days of Christian expansion the association with Judaism was, however, of considerable benefit to the Christian apologist.⁶⁰ The communities of God-fearers, gathered round the synagogues of the Dispersion, provided the means for the rapid extension of Christianity through the Roman Empire. The Diaspora was the seed-bed of Christianity in the Gentile world.⁶¹ The Christian

⁶⁰ cf. Bevan, *Legacy of Israel*, p. 64. 'When the first Christian missionaries, themselves Hellenistic Jews, went out to preach, they found everywhere in the cities of Asia Minor and Greece to which they came, a body of Gentile proselytes or semi-proselytes, attached more or less closely to the Jewish synagogue. When they based their message on the belief in one God, who had made Himself known to Abraham and Moses, and had spoken through the Hebrew prophets, they found large numbers of Gentiles to whom this foundation was already familiar.'

⁶¹ cf. Weiss, *op. cit.*, p. 176-7. 'Die Gedanken, mit denen griechische Philosophie die Mythen und Riten der griechischen Volksreligion verspotteten und bekämpften, wurden in der Hand der Juden zu Waffen im Kampfe gegen das Heidentum. Aus diesem griechisch-jüdischen Arsenal haben wieder die alten Christen ihr Rüstzeug entlehnt. Besonders deutlich ist das zu erkennen bei den literarischen Apologeten des zweiten Jahrhunderts, Aristides, Justin, u. a. . .'

teacher found the way well prepared for him by the Jewish monotheists; the works of Justin and other apologists of the second century are full of arguments which previously had been used by the Jews and the more cultivated Greeks against pagan idolatry; ⁶² Jewish demonology, too, provided a convenient explanation for the existence of the gods of the heathen against whom the Christians were fighting.

Judaism contributed to Christianity a fine exposition of the missionary ideal, and many of the arguments for missionary apologetic; but at this point the two religions part, for the Jews themselves forsook their missionary ideal. Jesus, by His very simplicity, made Judaism universal; the Jews, jealous of their place as the Chosen People, saw only for a moment the vision of the opening of the door to the Gentiles, and preferred to guard their cherished position. Of Jewish particularism, Christian universalism became the rightful legatee. Klausner to-day, who is on the whole extremely favourable in his attitude to Jesus and to Christianity, yet criticizes and condemns the universalism of Jesus. He writes: ⁶³ 'In the selfsame moment he both annulled Judaism as the life force of the Jewish nation, and the nation itself as a nation. For a religion which possesses only a conception of God, and a morality acceptable to all mankind, does not belong to any nation, and consciously or unconsciously breaks down the barriers of nationality.'

Judaism has contributed to Christianity the most precious part of our heritage. From Judaism we have indeed also borrowed some relics of a more primitive religion. To the Jews, however, we owe our Founder, we owe our Bible, we owe our conception of God. It is profoundly true, as Klausner says, that in Jesus this rich heritage is no longer the possession of any special nation. To the Christian this will seem, not a defect, but rather the supreme merit of the religion of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, the Saviour of the World.

⁶² cf. Weis, *op. cit.*, p. 186-7. 'Paulus geht wie das Judentum seiner Zeit von dem beinahe dualistischen Gedanken aus, das die gegenwärtige Welt unter der Herrschaft des Satans steht, den er geradezu einmal "den Gott dieses Äons" nennt. Unter ihm stehen die "Herrschaften und Gewalten und Mächte," die erst beseitigt werden müssen, wenn die Herrschaft Gottes voll verwirklicht werden soll. Sie beherrschen das Heidentum. . . .'

⁶³ *op. cit.*, 390.

THE HELLENIC CONTRIBUTION TO CHRISTIANITY

By R. B. TOLLINTON, D.D., Canon of Chelmsford, author of
Clement of Alexandria, etc.

NO Hellenic element is discoverable in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. He was Jesus of Nazareth, a man of Galilee, and though there was a Greek population in Decapolis, and a Greek school at Gerasa, such influences were without effect upon His message and His outlook. The affinities of Jesus were with the Prophets and the greater Rabbis, not with the philosophers. Always His appeal is to the heart and to the will, rather than to the mind. The distinctive quality and charm of the Sermon on the Mount are lost as soon as you transform it into a scheme and a system. Peter confessed that Jesus was the Messiah, 'Thou art the Christ,' and received memorable commendation. Had Philip similarly made a great acknowledgment and declared, 'Thou art the Logos, Thou art the Word,' it is difficult to say what answer the Lord would have accorded to such a tribute. Contrary to what has often been supposed or assumed, Jesus, we are told, was not bilingual; 'He spoke Aramaic,' writes Klausner, 'and there is no hint that He knew Greek.'¹

So originating, what would have been the future development of the Christian religion if there had been no Hellenic contribution? The question is an interesting one to ask, but obviously impossible to answer. So soon as Christianity spread from Galilee to Antioch, so soon as men of Cyprus and Cyrene 'spoke unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus,'² Hellenic influence was inevitable and the Hellenic contribution was assured. In the language, the culture, the education, the literature, in the whole mode of life of the civilized world that lay around the Mediterranean, the Greek element was so pervasive that no new religion could attempt to ignore it and survive.

¹ *Jesus of Nazareth*, 363.

² *Acts xi*, 20.

Already Judaism had in large measure abandoned its isolation. If there were conservative Israelites in the first century, as there had been in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, still there were Philo and the Septuagint and the steady solvent of common commercial interests to tell on the other side. Equally inevitable was the influence of this Hellenic environment upon Christianity. Historical conditions do not make a religion, but at least they largely determine the course of its development. The religion of Jesus could only win adherents in the Gentile world by speaking to them in a language they understood and by bringing its message into contact with their life. Hence, inevitably, in various measures, adaptation, accommodation, fusion, assimilation, secularization, syncretism, many names for the one diversified process by which Nazareth was linked with Athens.

The appointment of the seven deacons, due to a 'murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews,'³ and especially the work and influence of Stephen, mark an early stage of this process. We watch it again with interest in St. Paul. Paul is a Hebrew, essentially so, even when he has become a Christian. Temperamentally he is far removed from the Hellenic outlook and mentality. His convictions and his methods of argument are not those of the philosopher. And yet, consciously or unconsciously, he has assimilated Hellenic elements from his environment. He grew up in Tarsus, an important centre of philosophic teaching, and when he quotes Greek poets, or uses the terminology of the mysteries about the Sacrament, or gives ethical counsel which suggests comparison with Seneca's Stoicism, or has recourse to allegory in his exegesis, he in each case borrows from Hellenic stores, not in any spirit of propaganda, but just because he is using the *media* with which all educated people of his time were familiar. 'The Greeks seek after wisdom,'⁴ he said reproachfully. Yet there are passages in his own writings in which the Greek outlook is undeniable. Though he does not use the term Logos in its technical sense, the doctrine of the Logos is clearly recognisable in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Colossians, the Pauline authorship

³ Acts vi, 1.

⁴ I. Cor. i, 22.

of which there seems no sufficient reason to dispute. The single sentence, 'In him all things consist' τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ συνέστηκε,⁵ is fundamentally and intrinsically as Greek as it can be.

It is time, however, to pass beyond the New Testament. It will be sufficient to note that there is a Hellenic element in many of its principal books. St. Luke's Gospel, the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistle of James, and especially the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel are all affected, not merely as a matter of language, by Greek influences. What is even more notable is the fact that before the close of the period covered by the New Testament is reached, such definitely Hebraic items as the Kingdom of God, the national Messiah, and a good deal of eschatology, have already receded. They were a hindrance rather than a help to the new religion in its presentation to the Gentile world.

The Apologists—and we will not forget Justin Martyr among their number—accomplished a considerable work of reconciliation. Some of their shorter writings, especially the *Epistle to Diognetus* and the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix, combine literary grace with spiritual value in a degree not common among the productions of early Christian theology. And then come the Gnostics. There is no authoritative definition of the term.⁶ If Marcion was a Gnostic he was one of a very different type from Valentinus, for in Marcion there is little Hellenism, while in Valentinus it is so predominant as to leave the New Testament, not alone the Old, in negligible unimportance. Along with such recognizable movements there went on a quieter work of peaceful penetration. Protests were made by the fundamentalists of the time against such association of Jerusalem with Athens, but they had just as little permanent result as Juvenal's indignation a century earlier at the blending of the waters of the Orontes with the Tiber. Eusebius, looking back upon this period, found no fault with the process that Hellenized Christianity; he finds a special satisfaction in recording that among the faithful there were people well known for their

⁵ Col. i, 17.

⁶ cf. the German epigram :

'Was man nicht definieren kann
Das sieht er gern als gnostisch an.'

education and their philosophy.⁷ 'Not many wise men after the flesh'; so Paul had said, but those days had gone by.

The decisive stage of this fusion is to be found in the Alexandria of Clement and Origen. They entered, of course, into other men's labours; indeed, it has been claimed that Christianity had already been completely formed before their time.⁸ But their names mark a period, and the Hellenic contribution to Christianity, which some might prefer to describe as the Hellenic invasion, was never in question after the date of the *Stromateis* and the *De Principiis*. The world recognized what had taken place, and Christian lecture rooms were, on occasion, crowded with people of open mind in search of a religion. There was a fine grandeur in the teaching of these men at their best. Clement's contention that Philosophy had, equally with Law, been a preparation for Christianity; Origen's speculation, made easier by Stoicism, of world following upon world, had an arresting magnificence about them, even if the 'orthodoxasts'⁹ had ground for their retort that such things had no connection with the Christian faith.

But undoubtedly the change from Galilee has been great. Interest has shifted from conduct to belief. Instead of a kingdom of God very near and very real, we find abstract principles, a remote prospect of the beatific vision, and God so far exalted above sense and time that it is difficult to relate Him to His world. We have passed, as Hatch says,¹⁰ from a world of Syrian peasants to a world of Greek philosophers. The interest of the educated section of the Christian society was now for succeeding centuries centred in such subjects as the doctrine of the Logos, the relations of the first and second Persons in the Trinity, the procession of the Holy Spirit, astrology, human freedom, how to reconcile divine goodness with divine justice, how to interpret the Church's sacred books, how to answer the dualists, what to include, what to exclude, in a Canon or a Creed. Questions are followed up into their metaphysical implications. There is a passion for definition and for the formu-

⁷ e.g. *Hist Eccl.* v, xxi, the reference being to the martyr Apollonius.

⁸ Renan, *Marc-Aurèle*, 511, 'Le christianisme était entièrement fait avant Origène.'

⁹ Clement uses this term.

¹⁰ *Hibbert Lectures*, 1888, p. 1.

lation of doctrine. For thoughtful people there were few rival interests. Politics offered little scope. The area of science, as we understand the term, was very limited. Literature was decadent. Philosophy, outside the Church, had reached its term in Neo-platonism. So the educated world had leisure to be theological. If the Hebrew in large measure supplied the material, the method and criteria were purely Greek.

Such, in very general terms, was the character of the early influence of Hellenism upon the Christian Church. The Programme of our Conference describes it as a 'contribution.' Before we accept the term, there rises a prior question. Gain and loss are involved in every such amalgamation. Did the Church, on the whole, gain or lose by this assimilation? Did Christianity exploit Hellenism? Or did Hellenism capture Christianity?

It must probably be admitted that what we find in the New Testament is in the main religion, but that what we find in the age of the Fathers and the Councils is theology. It is their sense of this change which makes both Hatch and Harnack tell the story of its phases with a certain accent of regret. Hatch writes : ¹¹

'It is possible to urge'—he clearly states the view with sympathy—'that Christianity, which grew on a soil whereon metaphysics never thrived, which won its first victories over the world by the simple moral force of the Sermon on the Mount, and by the sublime influence of the life and death of Jesus Christ, may throw off Hellenism and be none the loser, but rather stand out again before the world in the uncoloured majesty of the Gospels.'

Harnack's position, if I rightly understand it, is more qualified. He admits the loss. The original enthusiasm of Christianity evaporated. The Church had to pay a high price for maintaining its position.¹² 'The union of the Christian religion with a definite historical phase of human knowledge and culture may be lamented in the interest of the Christian religion, which was thereby secularized.' On the other hand, he allows that, the world being as it was, the gain predominates. We are not to regret this secularization, 'as absolutely everything that we have and value is due to the alliance that Christianity and

¹¹ *op. cit.* 351.

¹² *What is Christianity?* 199, 210.

antiquity concluded in such a way that neither was able to prevail over the other.'¹³ The same view finds even more assured expression in Edward Caird's *Evolution of Religion*.

'The development of a religious idea,' he writes, 'seems to involve the gradual loss of it in the medium which it seeks to penetrate, and it is only when we look to the end that we can see that such loss is instrumental to a higher gain.'¹⁴

In such company we may stand by our title and speak of the Hellenic 'contribution.' There is such a thing as the love of the mind for God; for this Hellenism provided a medium and a way. It was no small service to re-establish the great Hebrew truth of monotheism upon a reasoned and philosophic basis. The doctrine of the Logos was in its own time an important and far-reaching concept, and its association with the historic person of Jesus of Nazareth enabled Origen to develop his thought of the many offices of the divine Word.¹⁵ There is a whole store of religious value in his conception of the manifold Christ. Also, given the doctrine of the Trinity, it is not easy to overrate the importance of the same great master's theory of Eternal Generation. Clement's Gnostic, more akin to the wise man of Stoicism than to the mediaeval saint, comes as near as any type I know to the Christian gentleman. The Alexandrian idea of punishment, Platonic in origin, regarding penalties as remedial in purpose and never as vindictive, is one it does not shock us to accept. It is a pity the Church ever forgot that fire, symbolically, is an agent of purification, not an instrument of torture. Or take the Athanasian Creed. If we omit the damnatory clauses, which are no integral part of its structure and only correspond to the anathemas which were the sanction of every creed, and also if we estimate it historically, setting it in its own age, which was different from our later days,

¹³ *History of Dogma* ii, 14.

¹⁴ Vol. ii, Lect. x, p. 257.

¹⁵ cf. The characteristic passage, *In Joan.* i, 20 (Berlin Edition iv, 25): 'The Redeemer becomes many things, perhaps even all things, according to the necessities of the whole creation capable of being redeemed by him . . . Happy are they who have advanced so far as to need the Son of God no longer as a healing physician, no longer as a shepherd, no longer as the Redemption; but who need him only as the Truth, the Word, the Sanctification and in whatever other relation he stands to those whose maturity enables them to comprehend what is most glorious in his character.'

then will it not be out of place to pay our tribute of unreluctant homage to this splendid Christian hymn. All these things—and the list might be made indefinitely longer—are real contributions, assets of religious thought which merit abundant acknowledgment. We can never say what might have been, but, given the conditions as they were, it is difficult to see how a purely Galilean Christianity could have spread or been perpetuated. The greater was the Church's gain when Christian teachers added to her store truths and ideas which went back to Pythagoras and to Plato, to Zeno and Chrysippus, or taught lessons which would not have sounded altogether alien to such men of the time as Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, Galen, Epictetus, Dio Chrysostom or Maximus of Tyre.

On one other point a word should be said before we leave the early centuries. Hellenic influence tended to make Christianity abstract, universal, theoretical, systematic. Plato was the greatest of the Greeks, and Platonism had never accorded much importance to the concrete and the particular. Events were of little account; ideas alone had value. The inevitable outcome of this tendency was the depreciation and neglect of history. It is notable that the pagan school of Alexandria produced admirable literary critics, acute mathematicians, the most competent physicians and surgeons of their time, but no historians of any account. Practically this university had no faculty of history. There is a similar deficiency or omission in Hellenic Christianity, most completely in the Gnostics, who abandoned history altogether. Even when Heracleon deals with the narrative element in the Fourth Gospel, he cares nothing for the events; they are mere symbols, devoid of intrinsic interest, indicating abstract verities. The only history in which the Gnostics took any interest was the pre-mundane one, if such a contradiction in terms may be allowed. They taught, for example, a pre-mundane Fall, a theory seriously revived in recent Bampton Lectures,¹⁶ interesting, even if it be difficult of acceptance in our age of scientific evidence.

Now this indifference to the historical is discernible also in the Alexandrine Fathers, more in Origen than in Clement.

¹⁶ *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*. By Prof. N. P. Williams, Lect. viii.

Moses, David and Elijah are interesting to us as individuals serving God under the special conditions of their respective ages. 'David after he had served his own generation fell on sleep.' 'Let us now praise famous men.' The charm and value of the Gospels lies largely in their detail, their colour, their particularity. A simple-minded woman is recorded to have said that, if King Alfred really did not forget the cakes, then she supposed that English history was no longer true. In the same spirit we find real value in our knowledge that the Lord once set a little child in the midst; walked alone, solitarily ahead of the twelve, in the last journey to Jerusalem; noted once and criticized the domestic activity of Martha. So we should be sorry not to know how Gallio dealt with Paul and how Paul did on occasion assert his rights as a Roman citizen. There is interest, great interest, in the facts. The Christian Platonists felt little of all this. Clement is always glad to escape through allegory from the fact to the idea. The wars of Joshua are only interesting to Origen as an anticipatory picture of Jesus, the spiritual Joshua, leading His people into their Promised Land. Their interest moves in the realm of ideas, and ideas were as attractive to the Greek as they are unattractive to the normal Englishman.

But the point is this. With all their love of speculation and abstraction, with all their depreciation of historical values, Christianity is for these Alexandrian Platonists a historical religion. Up to a point they followed the Gnostics, or were Gnostics, but thus far and no farther. The Word had come *πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως*, 'by divers portions and in divers manners,' all down the ages, but once especially and in fullest manifestation in the life and person of Jesus. The divine Word found expression in an actual human character, in a particular country, at a particular date. To this extent these philosophers confronted the world with facts. Origen is prepared to reply to Celsus on the details of the Gospel narrative, and is as ready as Tertullian to argue from the actual spread of Christianity to its truth. He discussed the darkness at the Crucifixion as rationalistically as any modern,¹⁷ and investigated sites in Palestine much in the spirit of one who is writing a historical geography

¹⁷ In *Matt. Com.* 134 (ed. Lommatzsch v, 51).

of the Holy Land.¹⁸ With all their love of abstraction these philosophers refused in the crucial point to abandon history. In effect, they justified the dating of a new era from the birth of Jesus Christ. They were Platonists, with no great love of Aristotle, but for once they accept his principle, ἀρχὴ τὸ ὅτι; they begin with a fact.

Kirsopp Lake has suggested that the history of the Christian religion should be regarded as a series of syntheses.

‘The final achievement of Christian theology was,’ he writes, ‘the synthesis effected by St. Thomas Aquinas between the Christian theology and the philosophy of Aristotle . . . There has been no synthetic progress in theology since the time of St. Thomas Aquinas.’¹⁹

It is happily no part of my task to attempt to estimate or measure the intellectual and religious greatness of the Angelical Doctor, who stands first among the masters of Scholasticism. The massive structure of his achievement abides like some solid castle of the Middle Ages.

‘It may be doubted whether any man save his master Aristotle ever mastered and digested all the encyclopaedia of the sciences better than did the Dominican scholastic.’²⁰

In this mighty combination, what is the character of the Hellenic element?

Thomas was an Aristotelian. For five hundred years the Arabs had preserved in their own language the translated works of Aristotle, and when the Arabs settled in Spain these writings, by a further translation into Latin, became accessible to Jews and to Christians. By the middle of the thirteenth century all the works of Aristotle were available in Latin and widely used. Albert the Great wrote six folio volumes of commentary, and Thomas Aquinas was Albert’s pupil. The outcome of this is plain enough in the *Summa Theologiae*. Aristotle is here appealed to as authoritative.²¹ He is quoted as ‘the Philosopher.’ References to his works are more common than those to Holy Scripture. Terminology is largely Aristotelian. The ethical teaching of Thomas is often derived from the same source. We

¹⁸ In *Joan.* vi, 40 (Berlin Ed. iv, 149).

¹⁹ *Landmarks of Early Christianity*, 10-11.

²⁰ Prof. T. F. Tout, *St. Thomas Aquinas* (papers read at the sixth centenary of his canonisation), p. 16.

²¹ Aristotle was ‘praecursor Christi in naturalibus sicut Joannes Baptista in gratuitis.’ Quoted in H. O. Taylor’s *Classical Heritage of the Middle Ages*, 123.

have the familiar Aristotelian antitheses between the active and the contemplative lives; between *potentia* and *actus* (δύναμις and ἐνέργεια); between matter and form; between different kinds of causes, material, efficient, final; between the absolutely and the relatively good. The intellectual temper of the work is Aristotelian. The Christian faith is regarded as a series of theses to be proved. There is great belief in classification, confident reliance upon deductive reasoning, a reluctance to leave questions without an answer. The practice of the schools has largely determined the form of Thomas' work. When we can fortify his *Respondeo dicendum* by a reference to what Aristotle taught, then he can pass without qualm to consider the succeeding proposition. Incidentally, perhaps Christian theology has never been so divorced from history as it is in this scholastic phase.

The *Summa*, then, is Aristotelian, but it is so with certain qualifications. The thought of St. Thomas is always his own, even if Aristotle had thought and said the same before. The mind of the great schoolman was originative and constructive, never merely adaptive, and his intellectual independence has been justly asserted by Professor A. E. Taylor in the following terms:

'There is one sense,' he writes, 'in which Thomas is no follower of Aristotle nor of any other man. He never accepts a doctrine because it has been taught by a man with a famous name and an established reputation; what he accepts he accepts because he believes it to be true, or, if not absolutely and certainly true, the nearest approximation that can be made to the exact truth. If then he, in many parts of his philosophising, follows Aristotle so closely, it is because he is convinced by the independent exercise of his thinking powers that Aristotle is on right lines.'²²

There is a dependence which amounts to mere repetition or reflection. There is a dependence which implies no more than the readiness of the mind to learn, to receive, to assimilate, to recognize. From such dependence no sane man would wish to be exempt. And only in that sense was Thomas an Aristotelian.

Again, it is said that every man is born either a Platonist or an Aristotelian. This is no more the whole truth in philosophy than the corresponding alternative between Conservative and Liberal is the whole truth in politics. These common antitheses accentuate division and often facilitate our thinking by obscur-

²² *St. Thomas Aquinas* (papers ut. sup.), 50.

ing facts. Plato and Aristotle had large elements in common, and Platonic influence is not lacking in the *Summa Theologiae*. Except possibly the *Timaeus* in a translation, Thomas had probably no first hand knowledge of Plato's works, but a great deal that was Platonic in character and even in origin reached him through Augustine. It was in this way that the Platonic doctrine of ideas came in a modified form within the area of Thomism. Professor Taylor has defined the Thomist philosophy as 'no mere Aristotelianism revised but a masterly synthesis of both Plato and Aristotle with one another and with Augustine, effected by original insight of the first order.'²³ In whatever proportion we assign to the earlier masters the formative influence in scholastic philosophy, the Hellenic contribution remains considerable and evident.

What is fundamentally not Aristotelian, nor indeed in any sense Hellenic, in this philosophy is the doctrine of revelation. Divine revelation surpasses human reason. The principles it teaches are articles of faith and not attained by argument. They are not received from other sciences but come direct from God, 'immediate a Deo per revelationem.'²⁴ Theology has therefore in its main assertions greater certainty than any other branch of knowledge. The doctrines of the Trinity and of the non-eternity of matter were beyond the powers of the human mind to demonstrate.²⁵ But they had been given by revelation. They were therefore from the Thomist standpoint more certain than any mathematical truth. With vast labour and admirable acumen these and similar data were elaborated and supported by reasoning. Once make the articles of faith secure, and then the whole field was left clear for the unfettered activity of the human mind in an epoch when it was wonderfully trained and less distracted by other interests than in any subsequent century. But the *data* of the revelation were *data*, truths given and beyond question. This is not Greek, nor is it modern. It is the intellectualized echo of the old prophetic watchword, 'Thus saith the Lord.'

After Thomas comes Dante, for whom Aristotle was the head of the philosophic family, 'the master of those that know.'

²³ *op. cit.* 53.

²⁴ *Summa Theol.* I, 1, i, 5.

²⁵ *Ib.* xlvi, 2.

The tradition goes on to Chaucer, who says of his clerk of Oxenford :

‘For, him was liever have at his beddes hed
Twenty bookes clothed in blake or red
Of Aristotle and his philosophie,
Than robes rich or fidel or sautrie.’

Aristotle was no poet, but at least he had written the *Poetics*, so it is pleasant to find the poets speaking well of him.

Thus in two notable instances, in the Alexandrine Platonists and in the work of Thomas Aquinas, the Hellenic influence on Christianity is evident and of evident value. We must not look for it in the Reformation; the quieter voices are hardly audible amid the clamour of controversy. In no century has the Christian religion been more closely involved in historical conditions than in the sixteenth, but such epochs are not congenial to philosophy and dispassionate thinking. Yet even of the age of the Reformers it is well to remember that the Revival of Learning had been preparatory to their own movement; that Erasmus declared, ‘I have given up my whole soul to Greek learning’; that when men heard John Colet they declared it was like listening to Plato himself; and that there was something recognizably Greek in the sanity and the sense of proportion that characterize the mind of our own judicious Hooker.

We owe to the President of our Conference, the Dean of St. Paul’s, a tribute of thanks for his Hulsean Lectures on *The Platonic Tradition in English Religious Thought*. If anyone wishes to understand the extent and the value of the Hellenic contribution to Christianity as it has been operative for three centuries in the Church of England, he may learn much from this admirable little volume, which will help him not least by suggesting what to read. The whole course of the tradition from Jeremy Taylor to Bishop Westcott is so clearly traced in the Dean’s lectures that this reference to his work may spare my hearers further extension of an already lengthy paper. On only one point shall I invite you to see more in detail the working of Hellenic influence in the Church of our own country.

The Cambridge Platonists have lately been studied with an increasing interest which they well deserve. This little band of men, ‘Latitude men,’ ‘Latitudinarians,’ as they were often called, whose date is the first half of the seventeenth century

and whose names are associated with Emmanuel College, Cambridge, were the broad churchmen of their day, men of the Greek temper at its best, yet of unquestionable loyalty to the Church of England. Benjamin Whichcote, some time Provost of King's, was an excellent preacher and notable for his moral and religious aphorisms, of which I will only quote again the well-known one, 'Heaven is first a temper and then a place.' John Smith has left discourses on such subjects as the Immortality of the Soul and the Excellency of true Religion, in which his love of Plotinus is specially evident. His friend Patrick, afterwards Bishop of Ely, preached a notable sermon on his death, concluding, quaintly as it seems to us, with the hope that his hearers might deserve to have it said of them, 'There walks at least a shadow of Mr. Smith.' A third member of the group was Nathanael Culverwell, who died comparatively young. He was probably Whichcote's pupil and became Fellow of Emmanuel. He seems to have been a man of the academic type, but he shared with his friends their profound belief in reason as 'the candle of the Lord,' their courtesy and tranquillity of soul, their love of learning, their genuine religion. Culverwell wrote *An Elegant and Learned Discourse of the Light of Nature*. He claims that Nature includes spiritual as well as physical realities, and he contends that Nature must not be viewed as separate from God. He speaks of Law and of the Law of Nature, which human reason can discover and understand. The Light of Reason is a derivative light; it comes from God, and the more men exercise reason, the more they resemble God Himself. It is 'a certain light,' 'a directive light.' Finally, it is calm and peaceable. Perhaps it is worth while to quote the opening passage of this concluding chapter :

'Tis *Lumen tranquillum et amicum*; 'tis a *Candle* not a *Comet*; it is a *quiet* and *peaceable Light*. And though the *Candle of the Lord* may be too *hot* for some, yet the *Lamp*, 'tis onely maintained with *soft* and *peaceable Oyl*. There is no *jarring in pure Intellectuals*. If men were *tun'd* and *regulated* by *Reason* more, there would be more *Concord* and *Harmony* in the *World*. As *Man* himself is a *sociable Creature*; so his *Reason* also is a *sociable Light*. This *Candle* would shine more *clearly* and *equally* if the *Windes of Passions* were not *injurious* to it. 'Twere a commendable piece of *Stoicism*, if men could always *hush* and *still* those *waves* that *dash* and *beat* against *Reason*. If they could *scatter* all those *Clouds* that *soil* and *discolour* the *face* and *brightness* of it; would there be such *factions* and *commotions* in

the *State*; such *Schisms* and *Ruptures* in the *Church*; such hot and fiery persecutions of some trifling *Opinions*? If the soft and sober voice of *Reason* were more attended to, *Reason* would make some *differencies* kiss and be friends, 'twould sheath up many a *Sword*, 'twould quench many a *flame*, 'twould bind up many a *Wound*. This *Candle of the Lord*, 'twould scatter many a dark suspicion, many a sullen jealousy. Men may fall out in the dark sometimes, they cannot tell for what; if the *Candle of the Lord* were but amongst them, they would chide one another for nothing then but their former breaches. 'Ἡ ἐπιστήμη ἱσטיῇ τὴν ψυχὴν, it calms and composes a *Soul*; whereas *Passion* (as the grand *Stoic*, *Zeno*, paints it) is ὁρμὴ πλεονάζουσα καὶ παρὰ φύσιν τῆς ψυχῆς κίνησις, an abounding and overboiling impetus, a praeternatural agitation of *Soul*; animi commotio aversa a recta ratione et contra naturam, as the *Oratour* stiles it. The *Soul*, 'tis tossed with *Passion*; but it anchors upon *Reason*.' ²⁶

It remains to note one or two general characteristics of this Hellenic element in Christianity.

A religious tendency, like a human character, usually has the faults of its qualities. The Greek desired to see and to know; he was the most intellectual person in the world, and Hellenized Christianity is Christianity intellectualized. It does not appeal to feeling, it does not challenge the will; its mission is to understand and to behold. Matthew Arnold, in a well-known chapter ²⁷ in *Culture and Anarchy*, contrasts Hellenism and Hebraism:

'The uppermost idea with Hellenism is to see things as they really are; the uppermost idea with Hebraism is conduct and obedience.'

One of the oldest and the truest definitions of the religion of Jesus was 'the Way.' It was a way of conduct, a way of life, a way into the holiest. But the condition of Baptism in the early centuries was assent to Doctrine. The offence for which the Church, when in power, handed men over to be burned was heresy. The 'essentia' of God, according to Thomas, was His 'intellectus,' His intelligence; God is Mind, not God is Love. We are reminded of the old maxims, 'Virtue is knowledge'; Γινῶθι σεαυτόν. 'Know thyself.'

Thus assent of the mind rather than manner of life came in practice to be the test of a Christian. It was a much easier test to impose. It is possible to say whether a man will or will not sign a document; questions of motive, character, ideals, are much more difficult to assess; even where conduct is in question—well, we recollect that Browning's Pope in *The Ring and the Book* took a long time to come to his decision. Our present

²⁶ Campagnac, *The Cambridge Platonists*, 312-3.

²⁷ Ch. iv.

difficulties in regard to Creeds and Confessions are really a part of the legacy of Greece. To allow this involves no disparagement of the wonderful contribution which has enriched the Christian society from Hellenic sources. Indeed, if it be a question of Light or Heat, most of us prefer the Light. It has been mainly through the Greek spirit that the Light of the World has illuminated our pathway. Only, pure reason can be just a little cold, and life and love and power and warmth are necessities of man's nature no less than the light of day. There is also Harnack's awkward saying that 'the intellect can produce nothing of religious value.'²⁸

A second feature of Hellenic Christianity, where it is true to type, is its balance, its sanity, its proportion. To the Greek mind form, order, coherence, lucidity were of paramount value. Its virtue was a mean between extremes, its rule that of *μηδὲν ἄγαν*, nothing in excess. The Greek *πόλις* had its limits of extent, the Greek temple its admirable but restrained proportions. Reason and order, *λόγος* and *κόσμος*, were its delight. Correspondingly, it found alien and unwelcome whatever savoured of excess, whatever lacked measure and definition, whatever was fanatical, disorderly, unbalanced, impassioned, intellectually violent. That gives you in religion sanity and healthy-mindedness. These things fail perhaps in a spiritual crisis. I do not know that they would have been of much help to Paul on the road to Damascus or to Augustine in the garden. They are the virtues of the middle way. When we climb the heights or sink into the depths, we must look elsewhere for vision or salvation. But lack of these, alike for the Church and for the individual, is disastrous on nine days out of ten. At the present time the Church of England is a discredited institution, discredited not by any vote of the House of Commons, but by the extraordinary lack of the sense of proportion which is, as it seems to me, equally manifest in its two extremes. If we are to be delivered from the futility and impotence of the present situation, this can only be by the revival, more desirable than evident, of the spirit which gave rationality, consistency, harmony, sweet reasonableness, and the sound mind to all that was most excellent in the fair world of Hellenism.

²⁸ *Hist. Dogma* ii, 327 n.

The religious interpretation of the world, the interpretation which sees in things temporal the manifestation of things eternal, is not exclusively a heritage from Greece. The Hebrew mind was familiar with it, as Psalm civ makes clear. The religions of Egypt and of the East are not without it, and the mystics have found their home in both hemispheres. Symbolism, sacramentalism, allegory, much of our poetry, much of our art, are dependent on this sense that man belongs to an intelligible or spiritual as well as to a sensible world. These things may run up into all kinds of extravagance, but religion would not be religion without them. As I have said, this element comes not from Greece alone, but it is right to acknowledge that the whole of this, perhaps the highest, phase of our religious experience would be other than it is, and vastly poorer than it is, if Plato and those who followed in Plato's way were left out of the account. Here perhaps is the greatest element in the Hellenic contribution.

'The real chosen people,' said Huxley, 'were the Greeks.' They were chosen, exactly as Israel was, for their own especial task. It is no defect in them that they did not achieve what other races were better fitted to undertake. We can understand Carlyle's complaint that 'Socrates was terribly at ease in Zion,' and the wish of that true Hellene, John Addington Symonds, that he could regain the Christian point of view. The Greeks were chosen for their particular service. Their gift is probably the greatest among the gifts which have made civilization what it is.

'On all this world of men inherits
Their seal is set.'

Had the Christian Religion been unable or unwilling to appropriate the Hellenic contribution, who of us will measure the vast impoverishment of such a loss?

THE ROMAN CONTRIBUTION TO CHRISTIANITY

By the Rev. ALFRED FAWKES, M.A., author of *Studies in Modernism*,
The Genius of the English Church.

I.

IT is only in a non-controversial age that the question of the nature, extent and value of the Roman Contribution to Christianity can be profitably raised. For the theological side issues which have been imported into it overflow into the neutral territory of the philosopher and the historian; 'the waters prevail exceedingly upon the earth.' We live in a time when they have subsided; these disputes, once a menace to civilization, are now 'volcanoes burnt out: on the lava and ashes and squalid scoriae of old eruptions grow the peaceful olive, the cheering vine and the sustaining corn.' The Library is the true end of Controversy: the poet was right; Bishop Milner was wrong.

'With awe around these silent walls I tread;
Here are the lasting mansions of the dead.
Here all the rage of Controversy ends
And rival zealots rest like bosom friends.
An Athanasian here in deep repose
Sleeps with the fiercest of his Arian foes—
Calvin grows gentle on this silent coast,
Nor finds a single heretic to roast.
And here, subdued their rage and quelled their pride,
The Pope and Luther slumber side by side.'¹

In some of the very valuable and suggestive papers to which we have listened carefully and from which we have learned much there has been, I think, a certain note of what one may call 'historical scepticism.' This has no doubt its uses: historians are no freer from dogmatism than their neighbours, and would do well to bear in mind the counsel of the Son of Sirach: 'Profess not knowledge which thou hast not.' They are apt to treat history as divines do Scripture:

*Hic liber est in quo quaerit sua dogmata quisque,
Invenit et pariter dogmata quisque sua.*²

¹ *The Library*, Crabbe.

² This is the book where each his doctrine seeks,
And this the book where each his doctrine finds.

And we may recall Bishop Stubbs' lines on Froude and Kingsley. Froude had been giving a Rectorial address at St. Andrew's, and Kingsley an inaugural lecture at Cambridge. The Bishop's comment was :

' While Froude informs the Scottish youth
That parsons have no care for truth,
Professor Kingsley loudly cries
That history's a pack of lies,
What cause for judgment so malign?
A little thought will solve the mystery :
For Froude thinks Kingsley a divine,
And Kingsley goes to Froude for history.'

But I confess I do not share this historical scepticism. I shall not say either that history is certain or reason infallible. But they are the best we have; they are what has 'made us to differ.' And 'I am not going to lay hands on my father Parmenides.' They criticize themselves, and, if we are wise, we shall trust rather to this scientific self-criticism than to the disguised shifts of apologetic. 'Their speech bewrayeth them.' For *shibboleth* they say *sibboleth* : 'they cannot frame to pronounce it right.'

II.

History has been treated philosophically, as matter of logical sequence, and critically as narrative. The two methods are not rival, but complementary. The first, taken by itself, is often arbitrary; the second disconnected. Taken together, they lead in the present connection to the conclusion of Gibbon—whose conclusions are seldom mistaken—that 'from every cause, either of a civil or an ecclesiastical nature, it was easy to foresee that Rome must enjoy the respect and would soon claim the obedience of the provinces.'³ Its influence was the first in time and in importance of the foreign infiltrations which were to transform the tempered Judaism of the Dispersion into a World-Church. Christianity is Roman; and it is so in the same sense as that in which Catholicism is. Not as a religion; here there is neither Jew nor Greek. Not as a creed; the East enacted creeds, the West discipline. Not as a philosophy. *Quid Athenis cum Hierosolymis?*⁴ asked Tertullian, with a characteristically

³ Ch. XV.

⁴ What has Jerusalem to do with Athens?

orthodox contempt for learning; the English equivalent being the question believed by the preacher to be unanswerable, 'D'ye think Paul knew Greek?' But as a Church—profoundly, radically and emphatically. This is why Tyndale translated the word *ἐκκλησία* not Church, but Congregation, or community; and why our XIX Article defines, or at least used to define, the Visible Church of Christ 'as a Congregation of faithful men.' This was to break with a venerable but equivocal tradition. For Churches, whether Catholic or Protestant, Free or Established, are evils—if necessary evils. 'This is a hard saying: who can bear it?' But it holds good of Governments and States as well as of Churches; both words, 'necessary' and 'evil,' must be accentuated; and there are evils which to escape from is to incur greater evils than themselves. I remember that great religious teacher, Baron von Hügel, describing an essay of Troeltsch on this subject. The conclusion was, 'Stay in your Church. In the Roman—well' (he said with a smile) 'if you can. In any other, certainly.' It was well and wisely said. But do not let us talk about the 'inherent spiritual authority of the Church' or the *Jus Liturgicum* of the bishops. These are *flatus vocis*—'insignificant' (or meaningless) 'speech.' And remember that, as soon as we have said the word Church, we have got outside the Gospel and are face to face with something foreign and hostile to it. 'My Kingdom is not of this world'; that of the Church is.

'Thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my Church.' Here is the *Privilegium Petri*—the Privilege of Peter. Then, almost in the same breath, 'Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.' This is the Offence, or Scandal, of Peter. Round the dome of the Vatican Basilica, where (it is believed) all that is mortal of the Prince of the Apostles rests, the promise of Christ is written in golden letters, 'Thou art Peter; and upon this Rock I will build my Church.' Would that 'Get thee behind me, Satan!' followed it. That it should do so is a dream—and a dream that comes through the Gate of Ivory. 'Whereas thou hatest to be reformed.'

III.

The Gospel, however, could not by itself have made the world Christian. The Jerusalem Apostles had, indeed, no wish to do so: 'I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the House of Israel.' It was the Roman world-dominion which made the Pauline propaganda possible; the Apostle of the Gentiles had reason to regard the powers that be as 'ordained of God.' It was the imperial officials who were the guardians of the public peace, kept communications open by sea and land—the Mediterranean was the ocean highway of the age—bridled barbarism, and restrained the rival fanatics of the East from flying at one another's throats. These hatreds, when baptized into Christianity, were so imperfectly; the Apocalypse, the message of the Spirit to the Churches, was written in letters of blood. From the first the lay State stood between civilization and the internecine conflicts of the sects. And for Rome, Christian as well as pagan, this State was, and is, an international one; the local patriotism of the nation taken by itself is a doubtful virtue; and the nation itself is a state within a state. This is the principle now at issue between the Vatican and the *Action Française*. The methods of repression adopted by the Pope are, indeed, those of another age. But the divergence between Maurras and Pius XI is that between two parallel straight lines; produce them as you will, they never meet.⁵

IV.

The local Church of Rome was of Jewish origin. We may connect it with the 'sojourners from Rome' (*Acts* ii, 10), and so with the Jerusalem Community. M. Delafosse's analysis of the *Epistle to the Romans* makes this more than a conjecture. As Malebranche saw all things in God, M. Delafosse, it is said, sees 'all things in Marcion.' But, perhaps for the first time, he has explained the text; the sections, like segments of a puzzle, fall into place and line. And from the first we recognize in this great Church the distinctive qualities which it retains to this day. Its note is that of authority: it is governmental and hierarchic; the Holy City, a mixture of Jerusalem and Babylon, the

⁵ *Saint-Siège*, 'Action Française,' et 'Catholiques intégraux.' Nicolas Fontaine, 1928.

City of the Pope-King. It has created little. It is fanatics who create; and though it can use fanatics adroitly—hierarchies as a rule can—fanaticism is foreign to it. But if it does not itself create, it gives shape and currency to what others have created; it selects, stereotypes and preserves. Our Article enumerates as the great Churches of the past Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch and Rome. The first, that of Jerusalem, dropped out early; what should have been its strength, its personal connection with Christ, became to it an occasion of falling. The establishment of a Caliphate in the family of Jesus was a real danger to primitive Christianity. Had history shaped itself on these lines, the mother would have crushed the child out of existence. Islam narrowly escaped this disaster; the victory of the House of Ali would have been fatal to it. ‘Who is my mother? And who are my brethren?’ The successors of a great man are not his kinsmen, but those who carry on his work.

V.

When Jerusalem disappeared, Rome entered into her inheritance. The spirit of the two Churches was similar. The reverence for tradition and the hierarchy was transplanted. ‘James, the Lord’s brother,’ had been the spokesman of the Twelve—‘Wherefore,’ he says, ‘my judgment is’ (*Acts* xv, 19)—and in the West this foreshadowed primacy was to take shape and substance. But, while a Pope of Jerusalem would have meant the extinction of Christianity, the Pope of Rome made Christianity a world-religion; and, what was a more doubtful benefit, a World-Church. The history of this Church is that of a threefold abdication. (1) The community gave what we call a power of attorney to the *προϊσταμένοι*, or elders; (2) these gave a similar power to the bishops; (3) the bishops gave it to the Pope. The first of these abdications took place early in the second century—Scaliger’s *saeclum ἀδήλον*: the next before its close. The third is still in progress; its end who can foresee? There have been significant developments since the Vatican Council the importance of which we overlook. Memories are short; and it is in the interest of hierarchies that their encroachments should be tacit and forgotten. It is not only at Rome

that this is so; 'priests of all religions are the same.' Macaulay reminds us that there are priests as dangerous at Oxford as at Rome. Macaulay was a Cambridge man; and, if one were quoting him at Oxford, it might be tactful to substitute the junior for the senior University in the quotation! But as we are at Cambridge, the text may stand. But wherever those to whom he refers may be found, the future, I think, is not with them. A late Prime Minister said of the once influential Liberal Unionists that they were 'the mules of politics, having neither pride of ancestry nor hope of posterity.' Substituting religion for politics, may not the same be said of the at present too powerful party in the Church of which we are speaking? It is repudiated both by the Pope and by Parliament; it has neither prospects for the future nor roots in the past. Others will enter into its labours. George Eliot told the late Lord Oxford, then a young man, that he would live to see a notable 'renaissance of religion among thoughtful people.' 'What Church would profit by it?' he asked. The answer was, 'The Church of Rome.'

Theologically the Roman Church, centreing as it does in the Papacy, is the formal completion of the hierarchical conception of Christianity; politically, it is the survival of the Roman conception of universal sovereignty. Historically the Romanizing of the World-Church was inevitable. The world on which Christianity entered was Roman; the religion which was to leaven it was cast in the mould, and bore on it the stamp, of Rome. The result was the imposing structure of Catholicism, by which—when we are speaking historically, not controversially—we mean Roman Catholicism. History knows no other: and it culminates in the Papacy; only so is it actually and formally complete. The ground for it was prepared. The hierarchy developed out of the earlier charismatic ministries when (1) with the diffusion of Christianity the spiritual gifts of the first days were discredited and disappeared; (2) when the breakdown of the expectation of the Parousia chilled enthusiasm; (3) in self-defence, when the unity and religious life of the communities were threatened by schisms; nor (4) can such causes as the ambition of officials and the influence of foreign and alien ideas be overlooked. The second and third centuries of our era, which witnessed the struggles of the Church with the various

forms of Gnosticism, witnessed also the development of the hierarchy, which, together with the creeds and the sacramental system, transformed the Christianity of the first age into the Catholicism of the next.

VI.

Latin Christianity has little gift for speculation; it is without either interest in, or the power of dealing with, ideas. Heavy-footed and heavy-handed, it moves clumsily in the territory of mind. Its point of view is political. The crusade of Pius X against Modernism was not primarily dogmatic. It made use of dogma for governmental purposes; which is a very different thing. At the time of the Encyclical *Pascendi* an Italian priest asked, as if it were the most natural thing in the world, 'Why does not M. Loisy say what they want him to say? No one asks him to believe it.' He was a perfectly sincere man; to question this would be to misjudge him and to misconceive the situation, but—his point of view was not ours. When the 'Hippolytus' was first performed at Athens, the famous line, ἡ γλῶσσ' ὁμώμοχ' ἡ δὲ φρὴν ἀνώμοτος,⁶ roused a storm of indignation in the theatre. Now it would be taken for granted—at Rome, at least, and perhaps not only there. From the first dogma was construed in terms of law, and belief in those of obedience; and the Church in which this conception took shape was the one living force left in a world of decay. Hence its deep root in the conscience and mind of Europe. Its mysterious claims and its association with the traditional seat of Empire impressed the barbarian invaders with a religious awe. *Tu regere imperio populos*: this was the function of Rome, Christian as well as pagan: the World-Empire was the foundation of and is the key to the World-Church. Hobbes has concentrated the history of Latin Christianity into an epigrammatic sentence:

'If a man consider the original of this great ecclesiastical dominion, he will easily perceive that the Papacy is no other than the ghost of the deceased Roman Empire sitting crowned upon the grave thereof. For so did the Papacy start up on a sudden out of the ruins of that Heathen Power.'⁸

Like other human institutions, it was the creature of circumstances. In our own Church the increased influence of the two

⁶ 'The tongue has sworn; the mind remains unsworn.'

⁸ *Leviathan*, ch. 47.

Metropolitan Sees during the last half-century is in some respects parallel to it: we seem to be becoming rather an Archiepiscopal than an Episcopal Church. Nor, in either case, is this anything which should surprise us. Officials magnify their office: and officials, however highly placed, are—men. The sufficient reason for the Papacy in particular is the *Roma Caput Mundi*, the Imperial tradition of Rome. What the sufficient reason is for the supremacy of Lambeth—I confess I do not know.

VII.

The exegetical and historical questions of which Rome is the centre are best approached by regarding the alleged evidences of this great politico-ecclesiastical institution, not as its cause, but as its effect; *i.e.* as an afterthought the object of which was to account for an existing state of things. It is on these lines that Catholic writers explain the Forged Decretals. *Valeat tantum*—let us take this for what it is worth: there is a sense in which this plea must be admitted. The Decretals consolidated and extended the power of the Popes; they did not establish it; it is only on the hypothesis of its existence that they can be explained. The same must be said of the mixed growth of legend of which St. Peter became the centre in the second century; those of Ebionite origin describing his conflicts with Simon the Magician—the name is a thin disguise for St. Paul, ‘them which call themselves Apostles, and they are not’ (*Rev.* ii, 2)—the latter belonging to a generation in which these controversies had been forgotten and the rival teachers united in a common work and triumph. So, in like manner, to-day, in many an Italian village one may see a Via Pio Nono and a Via Garibaldi; both ideal constructions of history, representing the two Italys, that of the Church and that of the Savoy Monarchy, and the union of the two. Legend? Yes; but true legend, ‘truth embodied in a tale.’

VIII.

The Petrine texts and the prominence of the Roman community have been useful weapons of controversy. But the Papacy rests on other foundations. Neither the texts nor the facts gave rise to the Primacy; it was the Primacy which gave

rise, if not to the texts, certainly to their interpretation; and, if not to the facts, at least to the perspective in which they were seen. These texts and these traditions have, however, played a part in the history of Christian beliefs and institutions the importance of which it is difficult to overestimate. Both have made for the legal and ecclesiastical elements in Christianity rather than for the religious.⁹ From an early date it was desired to find a middle term between the Judaizing of the Twelve and the Hellenizing of the Gnostics; the one would have meant the stifling, the other the dissolution, of Christianity. The tradition gathered content and volume until all proportion was lost, and everything in religion, even religion itself, became secondary to it; it became the primary fact in Christendom and the central doctrine of the Church. Its development was continuous and consistent; system has all along been the strength of the Ultramontane theology. But Peter's position among the *ὑπερλίαν ἀπόστολοι* can be accounted for by circumstances, by temperament, by the easy and informal intercourse of friends. And that this is the true explanation is indicated by the absence of anything like one man rule in the community after the Ascension. Paul was, beyond question, the foremost figure in the Apostolic period; 'if there was any primacy at this time (says Bishop Lightfoot) it was the primacy not of Peter, but of Paul.'¹⁰

IX.

As it was, Peter was a mean between Palestinian and Pauline Christianity: he oscillated, as it were, between the two. With the disappearance of the Apostles a new age set in. They left no successors, and Peter was no exception to the rule. It is probable that the famous passage, *Matt.* xvi, 18, is an interpolation made, not in the interest of the Papacy—there was then no Papacy—but of the rapidly developing official ministry whose origin it was desired to throw back into the first age. In any case it is clear that the Papacy has its roots, not in Scripture, but in history; it is history that must pass judgment on its

⁹ For a suggestive argument on these lines the reader may be referred to *Saint Pierre, Second Moïse*, a paper contributed by Prof. van der Bergh van Eysinga to the *Annales d'histoire du Christianisme*, Vol. II, Editions Rieder, 1928.

¹⁰ *Apostolic Fathers*, II, 490.

claims. And the historian will ask, not Does the Petrine tradition justify the Papacy? but, How did people come to think that it did?

The answer is that the Roman conception of Christianity had no competitor; and that the highest social and religious forces then at work in the world were on its side. The circumstances of the age hastened its victory, both by removing possible rivals and by emphasizing the need of stability in institutions and beliefs. The story of Attila retiring overawed by Leo the Great is symbolical. The Papacy represented those forces, not of religion only, but of reason and civilization to which men, cultured and uncultured, recognize their subjection; the Pope was heir by default of the Caesars, and could not escape their function of rule. The panegyric of the Papacy familiar in Catholic apologetic is not without foundation; but it errs when it transferred from a period of history to history as a whole. Were it limited to the age lying between the decline of the old civilization and the maturity of the new, it would be justified. The Popes could not save the old world, but they could, and did, prevent barbarism from flooding the ground out of which in due time the new world arose. Hence the debt, the immense debt, of gratitude which civilization owes to the Papacy. It was our pedagogue; and it was assuredly lighter than darkness, if it was also assuredly darker than light.

X.

When, in 800, Charles the Great was crowned by Leo III *Imperator Romanorum*, Emperor of the Romans, the Empire was re-born. But the structure contained from the first the seeds of dissolution. Each of the two concurrent powers claimed the supremacy; but from the nature of the case neither could permanently or effectually retain it. It was impossible either for the spiritual power to acknowledge subjection to the temporal, or for the temporal to abdicate in favour of the spiritual; they were conceived as, and they remained, two. Nor was either, as both professed to be, universal. There were nations beyond the Roman Empire; there were Christian communities outside the Roman Church. Gnostics, Marcionites, Donatists, Mono-

physites, Nestorians — it is too summary a proceeding to dismiss them as mere sectaries; they were once great, flourishing and widely diffused Churches, with priesthoods and hierarchies, creeds and sacraments, though all long since buried under the shifting sands of deserts with the wreckage of a forgotten world. What a treasure-trove, could their remains be uncovered and the dry bones live once more! A fallacious dream of unity to this day haunts Latin religion and the Latin world. *La diversité est détestable. Le caractère du mal est d'être divers!*¹¹ It could not, perhaps it never can, be realized. A more pedestrian philosophy had, for the time being at least, to suffice and provide a speculative foundation for the idealisms, the aspirations and the ethics of mankind.

Rome has never wanted saints, but it is not by saints that the strings of its action have been manipulated; sinners have pulled the wires to which saints danced. In particular a marked moral declension accompanied the sectionalism of the post-Reformation Church. F. X. Kraus speaks of the *brutale Hispanisierung Italiens*¹²; Spain was the evil genius of Rome. For with all its faults the Roman temper is not fanatical. It is that of the diplomatist and the politician; for the rest, Gallio like, it cares for none of these things. An Antonelli, for example, throws a dogma — the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, or the infallibility of the Pope — to pietists as one throws a bone to a dog to keep him from barking, while he himself schemes for the temporal power, or the Neapolitan Regno. Spanish religion had the seriousness which Italian lacked. But it was a murderous religion. Spain was the Prussia of the sixteenth century, and its God was a Moloch; the fire without was kindled by the fire within. Again, pre-Reformation and post-Reformation Catholicism differ in extension. The former, at least in the West, was 'The Church'; the latter is one of the Churches, the fragments into which Christianity was shattered in the sixteenth century; and there is all the difference in the world between the two things. The mediaeval Church contained many and conflicting elements in a state of uncertain equilibrium. At the Reforma-

¹¹ Diversity is detestable; the note of evil is that it is manifold. *L'Orme du Mail*, 217.

¹² The brutal Spaniardizing of Italy.

tion the freer and more active escaped, those that were left behind entering into new combinations and taking on new forms. Post-Reformation Catholicism is Latin, not European; and, as the Latinizing process has become more acute, the remains of the older freedom have disappeared: Jansenism, Gallicanism, Febronianism, in our own time Modernism, have been driven out. The continuity of the Catholicism of the twentieth century with that of the thirteenth is one of unintelligent assent, a thing of policy, ritual and formula: the spiritual kinship of the great figures of the Middle Ages follows other and larger lines.

XI.

The history of the Roman Commonwealth is reproduced with singular fidelity in that of the Roman Church. In each we see a body of men, strong rather than either intelligent or spiritually minded, indifferent to ideas, bent on material ends, prudent, tenacious, masterful, rising first to prominence then to domination, and founding a Universal State. In each religion was employed at an instrument of policy. Its sanctions were not wanting to the Empire; the imperial city and the Caesars received divine honours: the Church covered secular designs under the disguise of piety; her aims, her weapons were material; her wisdom was that of this world. Here, as there, decline followed close upon maturity. Some germ of disease, it seemed, entered into the system. The governing body lost the qualities of an oligarchy. Its tenacity became stubbornness; its indifference to ideas, unintelligence; its caution, craft or fraud. For the extent to which the famous Congregation of the Index poisoned the springs of ecclesiastical literature, both by suppression and interpolation, I may refer to the first volume of Friedrich's *History of the Vatican Council*.¹³ Since 1607 (he reminds us) the study of the genuine text of the Fathers and ancient authors has been made impossible: *ita ut in posterum non liceat affirmare ex lectione istorum auctorum quid illi senserint, sed quaenam est sententia Curiae Romanae, quae omnia depravavit*.¹⁴ And the world changed. New forces came into

¹³ P. Neusser. Bonn, 1877.

¹⁴ 'So that in future the reader cannot know the mind of the writer: what he finds in the opinion of the Roman Curia, which has poisoned the wells.'

play; new elements made their appearance; success called for other qualities—intelligence, adaptability, quickness—than those that had been demanded in the past. The centre of gravity shifted from the Empire to the new nations, and from the Church to the Churches. In each case the older body lingered, *informe, ingens, cui lumen ademptum*—in that of the Church it still lingers, and may do so long. But it lingers as a survival of a past world in a new order. Slowly detrition works upon it; slowly disintegration advances and cohesion decreases. It may disappear in the short agony of revolution; it may perish, more probably, in the long process of secular decay. In either case its destiny is the same.

Venit summa dies et ineluctabile tempus
Dardaniae: fuimus Troes; fuit Ilium, et ingens
Gloria Teucrorum.

XII.

The Latin genius has great qualities—form, order, unity—but they are discounted by one radical incapacity—‘one thing thou lackest’—the incapacity for dealing with ideas. It conceives religion and belief primarily as regulation, or enactment. *Ecclesia non judicat de internis*: ‘I do not ask you what you think; but you must obey.’ This is not indeed the position of the pietist or of the theologian; but it is that of official Rome. And it is probable that the inevitable loosening of the dogmatic principle among Latin Christians will be brought about less by criticism, for which they have in general neither aptitude, equipment, nor inclination, than by the relaxation of the political and governmental tendencies of the Church under the pressure of a new mental climate and by the conception of the Church as spirit taking the place of that of the Church as law. Meanwhile, the Papacy remains the most complete and consistent expression of the mediaeval outlook over life. Hence its unfailing attraction for the mediaeval mind, where this survives, as it does on a larger scale than we think, among us to-day. For it is possible to live in a time without being of it; the modern mind is exceptional even in the modern age. To how many the conceptions on which the mental life of to-day is based—evidence, sequence, causality—are foreign and unintelligible! The scientific founda-

tion is wanting : they live fragmentarily and, as it were, piecemeal in a disconnected world. This accounts for the reversions to type, the fantastic religious and moral aberrations, differing little in form and less in substance from those of the Lower Empire, which crop up from time to time among us ; still more for a reaction, passing indeed but, for the time being, noticeable, in favour of an institution so closely bound up with the past, so intimately associated with religion, founded on so long an experience and so close an observation of human nature as 'the mother and mistress of all the Churches,' the Catholic Roman Church.

It is not without significance that her title deeds should rest on a doubtful tradition—the Episcopate of St. Peter at Rome ; an uncertain relic—the deposition of his remains in the Vatican Basilica ; and on words that were in all probability not spoken by Christ. So amongst men truth and falsehood are mingled ; so the colours of good and evil are mixed. 'Creeds pass, rites change, no altar standeth whole.' But the connection of religion with external things, however close, is accidental : they pass ; it remains. The Papacy is a fragment of a past world surviving in a later age ; this is its refutation. For life is a stream ; and in religion, as elsewhere, a return to the past is impossible : the past is a stage in a process that has been definitely left behind. And now from the conceptions of life and man and God which took shape in the Church of the Middle Ages—that 'fascinating and august superstition,' as a historian has described it—mankind is moving ever further away. Yet there is no idea, or set of ideas, which has greatly moved humanity which, for all its admixture of base metal, has not left a residuum of gold.

'Même quand le progrès de la réflexion nous a montré que quelques articles sont à modifier dans la liste des choses que nous avons autrefois tenues pour certaines, nous ne rompons jamais avec le symbole sous lequel nous avons d'abord goûté l'idéal. Car la foi ne réside pas pour nous en d'obscures propositions métaphysiques ; elle est dans les affirmations du coeur.' ¹⁵

¹⁵ 'Even when the advance of reflection has shewn us the necessity of modifying certain beliefs which were formerly held without question, we do not (says Renan), we never shall, break with the symbol under which we first discerned the ideal. For faith for us consists not in a formal assent of the understanding to obscure metaphysical propositions, but in the affirmations of the heart.—Renan, *Marc Aurèle*.

CHRISTIANITY AS WORLD RENOUNCING

By the REVEREND A. C. BOUQUET, D.D., Hulsean Lecturer, 1924—1925.

BEFORE making any attempt at a historical survey of Christian renunciation, it will, I think, be best to devote a brief space to an endeavour to think clearly upon the nature and causes of renunciation in general, and upon the principles which govern its exercise.

First and foremost among the causes is the comparative shortness of human life, whether racial or individual. Obviously no human being can be or is expected to undergo every possible human experience. Just as there is division of labour, so there must be division of experience. Sooner or later man comes to feel the futility of trying to cram into the short span of his earthly existence everything that can possibly be done. It may be pleasant to taste briefly as many different types of experience as possible, but he who fails in good time to make a selection and to confine himself to serious specialization within that department of experience for which he seems by temperament and training to be suited will find himself sooner or later, so to speak, Jack of all trades and master of none. The principle upon which such a selection is based will be determined by the classification of values adopted in the case of each individual. I do not propose to embark upon a long treatise on axiology, but merely to remark that since we cannot realize all values at the same time, or even successively, we must come to some agreement as to which we shall choose for realization, and in what order. Selection then being necessary, the concentration upon a selected value involves inevitably a slight, if not a serious narrowing of life. This narrowing is due to the abjuration of experiences which seem to be of less value than the one or more selected. The result is in some form or another the life of renunciation. The minimum of renunciation is I suppose to be found in the 'doctrine of the mean,' according to which nothing is to be indulged in to excess, but only to just that

extent which is proper and fitting. A full life may thus include a taste of most of the more important and interesting experiences possible to the human being, but there will be limit and proportion in the tasting.¹ While on the one hand it must be admitted that a number of persons who have practised the renunciation of a considerable section of human experience have done so because they held a pessimistic view of the universe, or at any rate of its human denizens and their nature, and believed that the blissful fulfilment of their destiny demanded a sacrifice on their part of many things which, though seeming intrinsically harmless, were nevertheless dangerous to their eternal welfare, on the other hand renunciation does not necessarily involve pessimism. Indeed it is generally quite possible for one to take a wholly optimistic view of the universe and of human nature, and yet to renounce a large section of possible experiences for the sake of another section which seems better.

It follows from this that there will be an element of renunciation in the lives of all individuals, by whatever principles they may be governed; but that the determination to select lower rather than higher experiences cannot merit the title of renunciation, at any rate in the ascetic sense, in which it is used in this paper. In what ensues, therefore, the use of the term will be limited to a conscious rejection of an experience or experiences of the lower sort in favour of a higher experience or group of experiences. I realize that this involves the question as to what is meant by the terms 'higher' and 'lower,' and although there is a general convention as to their use in axiology, yet here I fancy is where we may have occasion for controversy.

Now there will be groups of people who have this in common, that they have made the same kind of selection, and there

¹ I heartily agree with Mr. J. S. Boys-Smith that specialization as meaning the fulfilment of one's vocation need not necessarily involve a narrow life in the bad sense. Shallowness is often narrowness. Depth need not be. 'The Kingdom of God' for each one of us is our vocation, and the promise to those who 'seek the Kingdom first' is that other things will be added unto them, which I believe to be abundantly true. Renunciation, therefore, viewed as specialization leads ultimately to the living of a full life. The intenser forms of specialization, however, are not for all; and in these days I think there is too much intense specialization forced upon those who have not the vocation for it by the circumstances of mechanised labour, as well as by faulty methods of education. It is this intensely exaggerated specialization which produces much of our modern malaise.

will be groups of people who hold that whatever varieties of selection may be permissible to human beings as individuals, there will be certain selections and abjurations which ought to be made by all. And further still, when these various selections of experience have been agreed upon, it will sooner or later become an accepted principle that to lapse from any such selection of experience is of the nature of an evil. Steps will then have to be taken whereby the individual may be enabled to train himself so as to prevent the possibility of a lapse, and in some cases the community will consent to inflict punishment upon those who become guilty of lapses.

Let me, at this point, dwell upon one or two particular cases. (1) In the first place, the renunciation of the married state. The value of the experience which we know as marriage is to-day regarded as one in which the great majority of persons ought to participate, and exceptions deliberately made are rare. It must be remembered, however, that this has not always been the case, and that in India there has been a traditional tendency to limit the enjoyment of that experience to a certain more or less strictly defined period of life, while some groups have held the view that the married state was an inevitable obstacle to the experience of higher values, and as such should be entirely omitted. (2) In the second place, the renunciation practised by the man who is devoted to some branch of study, let us say scientific research. For him any lapse from the discipline of concentration is evil. If he lapses he is guilty of disloyalty to his own scheme of life. The temptation to such disloyalty may be at times acute, but it is his duty to resist it, and to stick to his own value, even though it will probably involve a certain narrowness of outlook, as was seen in the classic instance of Charles Darwin. (3) In the third place, it is found that certain sorts of experience, if irregularly or excessively indulged in (or perhaps if indulged in at all, or even more than once), actually endanger the possibility of other types of experience held by general consent to be of relatively higher value. Indulgence in these lower experiences will then become an evil. To take a more interesting example than the obvious one—the experience of getting drunk—the dominant group in Russia (in opposition to the type of thought represented by Mr. Clive Bell) has decided that freedom for certain individuals

to indulge in the experience of belonging to a leisured class is dangerous both to themselves and to the community, and is believed to imperil the values which that community has agreed to select for experience. The existence of a leisured class is thus an evil, and an evil which is not merely a private sin but an offence against the community, otherwise a crime. It follows, therefore, that any attempt to indulge in this particular experience is punishable on the part of the community, and from the point of view of those wishing to indulge in the experience this means what is commonly called persecution. We may note in passing that the persecution of Protestants by Catholics has meant nothing more nor less than that indulgence in the experience of private judgment is held by the latter to be dangerous, and logically therefore must be forbidden. (Pacifism during a state of war is another instance.)

In religion the value selected for experience progresses in description, and it is worth remembering Höffding's definition of religion as 'the conservation of values.' This definition, however, will not hold unless we include under the term much primitive religion which is really primitive science, and which is utilitarian and anthropocentric. Spiritual religion is obviously concerned only with the conservation of the ideal values. I do not propose to embark upon a detailed discussion of the point, but merely to content myself with pointing out that the experience of contemplating the personality of the Deity in all His spiritual beauty and perfection has so captured some members of the human race that their renunciation has taken the form of giving up everything whatsoever which may conceivably hinder them from such contemplation. They have selected the experience of contemplation and eliminated almost all other experiences. Of course the bodily appetites form the chief hindrance to this selection, and with them may be bracketed the cares and riches and pleasures of this life (some would also add its social duties). Observation teaches further that man's attention wanders and strays from this exalted contemplation, and has to be pulled back again. 'The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak,' and this antithesis is the source of bodily discipline and sometimes of self-torture. If we consider the etymology of the word 'asceticism,' we shall find that its origin lies in the idea of the

discipline which is necessary to the practice of an art. Askesis, therefore, in its religious sense is the discipline necessary to the conservation of the highest ideal values, of which the acme is regarded as the practice of the art of holiness, and especially the art of divine contemplation.

But we have not yet exhausted the causes of renunciation. The second great reason for its adoption by human beings is a sense of uneasiness, based upon a special fact of experience, *i.e.* the existence of evil, and issuing in many instances in one or other of two theories about life as lived upon this planet and its ultimate destiny. There is first the theory which may perhaps for convenience sake be labelled as dualistic or Manichean, and which regards personal life in the world as the imprisonment of the soul in a system which is either imperfect and full of illusion ('name and form') or sheer evil ('the world a smudge'). The cosmos is not always felt to be 'very good.' There is in the second place the theory that human life on the planet with all its accompanying interests is shortly to be dissolved. Obviously the selection of values which we make will depend immensely upon whether we think our race has still many centuries of existence in front of it, or whether on the contrary we believe the whole 'sorry scheme of things entire' to be tottering upon the brink of annihilation. The first of these views we may call moral pessimism, the second scientific pessimism. With regard to the first, it is obvious that whatever form our rationalization of the facts may take, whether a doctrine of maya, or that of a pre-cosmic corruption of the world's soul, or merely a belief in the proneness of the human character to deteriorate when discipline is relaxed—in each case there would be ample room for askesis; and this is precisely what is found to be the case. Only those who live in sheltered academic circles, far removed from the temptations of sex or commerce, can delude themselves with the comfortable doctrine that the *fomes peccati* is really always the *fomes virtutis*; and even these have sometimes fallen into the sins of intemperance, intellectual pride, or petty meanness. The modern world should be in no danger of forgetting this. It has been observed that whereas the heroes and heroines of the Lausiac history retired to wrestle with demons, man to-day retires to wrestle with his complexes. *Mutato nomine de*

nobis fabula narratur. With regard to the second view, in spite of its importance, I regret that it will be impossible to discuss it fully in this paper. For some interesting remarks upon it I would refer my audience to the eleventh chapter of Dr. Broad's Turner Lectures on *The Mind and its place in Nature*, and would only add that so far as I know we are still awaiting Professor A. E. Taylor's counter-reply to them.

One further motive for renunciation may be referred to. In the choice of experience a number of items may be abjured merely for the reason that they are incidental and of little or no value in the education of the soul for its great final experience. As such they are a positive hindrance to those who desire to leave them behind and to press on to the prize of the high calling set in front of them. I can add to the sum total of my experiences by attending boxing matches and race meetings, and never betting to a higher extent than I can afford, or by going to a revue or a cabaret or a film show once a week; and by so doing I may inflict little or no harm on myself or others. I may also read a great many trivial novels. If I give up these and other similar occupations I shall narrow my life, but I shall have more time and energy to devote to the cultivation of other and as it would seem more important experiences. (Mgr. Benson we may remember makes his contemplative young man, Algy Banister, refer to his conventionalist family as 'quite mad.')

² The chief end of man, and his intentness upon gaining that end as speedily and fully as possible, must therefore determine largely the nature and extent of his choice of experiences, and so of his renunciation. A narrowing, what Troeltsch has in effect called a 'damming and controlling of the stream of life,' would seem to be essential to the attainment of that kind of existence which is not merely good but best.

After these introductory remarks I think we have obviously reached the point from which to begin some sort of historical survey of the Christian attitude to the ordering and selection of experiences. It is reported of Mr. G. K. Chesterton that being on an occasion in a certain town in North Britain and having lost his engagement book, he wired to Mrs. Chesterton

² *The Conventionalists*. See also his novel, *None other Gods*, for another interesting study of renunciation.

with artless simplicity: 'Am here. Where ought I to be?' There can be no doubt that a survey of organized Christianity will reveal the fact that it has adopted successively a series of different attitudes towards life in the world, ultimately arriving at the position which it occupies to-day. But the question will then arise: 'Ought it to be there?' We will consider the facts, then, in this order: first, 'What have actually been the successive Christian reactions to the possible experiences of life'; and secondly, 'What ought to be the reaction of Christianity to these experiences if it is to be true to its own intrinsic nature?' We shall then be able to consider whether Christianity has drifted out of its course, and in conclusion to estimate whether its reaction to all possible experiences fits it to be regarded as the final, normative, and absolute reaction.

The situation in Palestine in the midst of which Christianity emerged showed four typical schemes of selection. The Pharisees, 'straitest sect,' renounced the more genial experiences of the Gentile world in order that they might concentrate on the austere felicity of keeping the law. On the other hand, the Sadducees and the Hellenistic Jews were more tolerant of Gentile ethics, and their selection of experiences resembles those of the Khokmah or wisdom literature—a quiet worldliness, with a moderate enjoyment of most of the good things of this life. In the Essenes we have a typical Oriental world-renouncing sect of celibates, and one imagines that the Nazirites roughly correspond to the solitaries and hermits of other religions. In those who looked for the Parousia and the end of the age we have the type which, even if it does not organize itself into a monastic community, has no interest in the world order, which is shortly to be dissolved, but confidently awaits the Day of the Lord and thinks eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage to be trivial and unworthy occupations.

The attempt has been made to connect Jesus Christ and His teaching with the last group, and there are certainly strong reasons for doing so, but it is important to remember four qualifying factors in this connection,

(1) The establishment of the fact that there is an intensified development of eschatology in the course of the Synoptic narratives. There is less in Mark and Q than in Matthew and Luke in their final form.

(2) Jesus was criticised by his contemporaries for being 'a gluttonous man and a wine bibber, etc.' He obviously did not make the same selection of experiences as John the Baptist.

(3) Jesus taught many principles which depend for their exercise upon the continuance of an organised society, *e.g.* the use of money.

(4) The authority of the teacher somehow survived the collapse of the eschatological expectations of the first century disciples.

This means, to use a common formula, that Jesus proved to be immeasurably greater than the circle of his acquaintances, friends and would-be interpreters. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the primitive Jewish Christian community and to some extent the early Gentile community stood right outside the world of their day, absorbed in rapt communion with an unseen Lord whom they expected shortly to return in the flesh, and regarding the ordinary occupations, arts, sciences, and pleasures of contemporary society in a spirit of sheer detachment. It has been suggested that St. Peter, if one could have talked with him, would have shown comparatively little interest in everyday ethics, and much more in the Second Advent. I fancy this would also have been much more the case with St. Paul than some of us would like to have to admit.

Space forbids a detailed narrative of events, but we notice that in the Epistle of Ignatius to Polycarp, 110 A.D., there are directions for the solemnization of a wedding before the bishop, not as an evil to be tolerated, but as a mode of life worthy of encouragement. There is little in the letter about a state of impending judgment, and some evidence that the Christian Society was beginning to look forward to a slight measure of permanency. On the other hand there were still obscure corners (perhaps the East Syrian Church was one of them) where the married state was regarded as incompatible with full church membership, and baptism was reserved for celibates; and many postponed it until the approach of death.

As long as the Church remained an illicit and proscribed Society, liable to intermittent attacks of persecution, there was bound to be a strong element of other-worldliness in the outlook of all her members. This is best exemplified in the sentiments of the famous *Epistola ad Diognetum*, whether we accept for it an early or late date. Christians are in the world but not of the world. Every country is a Fatherland, and every Fatherland

is foreign. They are the soul of the world, strangers and pilgrims, and heaven is their real home. With the long peace, and finally the Milan edict of toleration, the determining factor of persecution was removed, and the Church not only began to receive large masses of imperfectly converted Gentiles into her bosom, but to soften her moral requirements to meet their needs. Asceticism no doubt grew and developed in order to supply the moral spice which persecution had hitherto provided. St. Paul's injunctions about 'enduring hardness,' "bludgeoning one's body," and 'Heavenly citizenship' were not forgotten, nor is it accurate to say that in the actual teaching of Jesus Himself there was no place for the world-renouncing element. The absolute call to poverty, wandering, and unworldly service is clear and unmistakable, even though it is not expected that all should respond to it. James also insists on the importance of keeping one's self 'unspotted from the world,' and the Johannine Christ prays not that His disciples should be taken out of the cosmos, but that they should be kept from the evil of the cosmos. The call was clear. Many certainly did respond. The Empire of the first four centuries was for a large percentage of its citizens a rather dull and hard-hearted and hopeless environment, heavily-taxed;² and they were glad to seek Soteria in renouncing it. The world-renouncing element, therefore, continues in the Church as an important factor in spite of the fact that the ethical teachers of the Gentile world into which our religion crossed over were by no means themselves all advocates of asceticism, though of course some of them were.

Let me now quote some extracts from the *Apodeixis* of Eusebius,⁴ which I think show the position of the Church about the time of the Council of Nicaea as clearly as those of any writer. The *Apodeixis* would seem to have been written between the years 314 and 318.

(1) The disciples, accommodating their teaching to the minds of the people, according to the Master's will, delivered on the one hand

³ Taxation and climate (warm and dry) favoured Egypt as the home of ascetic experiment. *ἀναχώρησις* is used of villagers who ran away from taxation, just as much as of monks who fled into the desert to avoid the corruption of Alexandria. Of pagan forms of monasticism in Egypt we do not know much, but there were, of course, *κάτοχοι* of Sarapis and also of Isis.

⁴ Trans. by W. J. Ferrar, S.P.C.K., 1920, chs. 8 and 9.

to those who were able to receive it the teaching given by the Perfect Master to those who rose above human nature; while on the other side of the teaching that which they considered was suitable to men still in the world of passion and needing treatment; and so they accommodated themselves to the weakness of the majority, and handed over to them to keep, sometimes in writing and sometimes by unwritten ordinances, that which was to be observed by them. Two ways of life were thus given by the law of Christ to his Church. The one is above nature and beyond common human living; it admits not marriage, child-bearing, property, nor the possession of wealth, but wholly and permanently separate from the common, customary life of mankind, it devotes itself to the service of God alone, in its wealth of heavenly love. And they who enter on this course appear to die to the life of mortals, to bear with them nothing earthly but their body, and in mind and spirit to have passed to heaven. Like some celestial beings they gaze upon human life, performing the duty of a priesthood to Almighty God for the whole race . . . Such then is the perfect form of the Christian life. And the other more humble, more human, permits men to join in pure nuptials and to produce children, to undertake government, to give orders to soldiers fighting for right; it allows them to have minds for farming, for trade, and the other more secular interests, as well as for religion: and it is for them that times of retreat and instruction, and days for hearing sacred things, are set apart. And a kind of secondary grade of piety is attributed to them, giving just such help as such lives require, so that all men, whether Greeks or Barbarians, have their part in the coming of salvation and profit by the teaching of the Gospel.

(2) The men renowned for piety before Moses are recorded as having lived when human life was first beginning and organising itself, while we live when it is nearing its end, and so they were anxious for the increase of their descendants, that men might multiply, that the human race might grow and flourish at that time, and reach its height; but these things are of little moment to us, who believe the world to be perishing and running down and reaching its last end, since it is expressly said that the Gospel teaching will be at the door before the consummation of life, while a new creation and the birth of another age at no distant time is foretold.

(3) We are able to provide teachers and preachers of the word of Holiness, free from all ties of life and anxious thoughts, and in our day these men are necessarily devoted to celibacy, that they may have leisure for higher things: they have undertaken to bring up, not one or two children, but a prodigious number, and to educate them in godliness and care for their life generally. On the top of all this, if we carefully examine the lives of the ancient men of whom I am speaking, we shall find that they had children in early life, but later on abstained and ceased from having them. For it is written that 'Enoch pleased God after Methusaleh was born.'

I have quoted Eusebius at some length (the whole of his Chapter IX is extremely interesting), not only for the plain reason that the three extracts vividly illustrate our subject, but also because the view of life which he sets forth in the first of them continued to be that of the Christian Church in its main

essentials right up to the verge of the Renaissance, and is indeed the distinctive view of Catholic Christianity to our own day, as may be seen for example in Baron von Hügel's well-known essay on the Supernatural. The ratio of world-renouncing to world-accepting Christians varied probably from generation to generation, and was undoubtedly determined by the vicissitudes of European history: such, for example, as the incidence of war, plague, and famine, the disruption of society resulting from the Barbarian invasions and collapse of the Western Empire, and the dark periods of mediaevalism like (in this country) the reign of Stephen. The principles of the distinction between the natural and supernatural life were re-stated and re-written by St. Thomas Aquinas, but I think we must feel that the statement of Eusebius well describes the main features and principles of the world-renouncing experience, whether we consider their embodiment in the lives of Antony, Pachomius, and the other celebrities of the Lausiac history of Palladius, Jerome and Eustochium, Benedict, Bernard of Clairvaux, Francis, Dominic, or Lady Julian of Norwich. It is not enough to say that the whole succession of ascetics owes its origin to the invasion of Christendom by Oriental notions of the malignity of matter and the obscenity of sex. That is only partly true. The call for some to forsake domestic ties and private incomes is clearly sounded in the teaching of Jesus, and the psychologist is ready to tell us that for those who wish to specialize in spiritual matters renunciation is a necessity, since

'the deprivation of normal satisfaction to the organism along any line of distinctive activity tends to promote an inner disturbance which in the case of man finds compensatory outlet in fantasy-thinking.'⁵

Fasting and continence therefore, by depriving two of the strongest appetites of their natural satisfaction, promote a tension which can be relieved by the cultivation of prayer and spiritual ecstasy. If Oriental asceticism is in certain aspects a rationalization of this experience, then so far Oriental asceticism correctly interprets the phenomena of life, though I believe that it teaches that the intenser renunciation is only 'a technical optimum for certain exceptional natures, which are ripe for saintliness. In such cases the creative energies are

⁵ W. J. Flower, *Introd. to the Psychology of Religion*, 1927.

capable of transmutation into a spiritual one. In others the repressed desires are merely forced up into the realm of the soul.⁶ But where this asceticism really errs is in its despair of remoulding life, of mending it or making it any better than it is by patience and ingenuity. The mediaeval ascetics quite as much as Eusebius and, I would add, quite as much as the Buddha, believed the world to be perishing and running down and reaching its last end. Relief might be possible, but cure was not.

Now the European world from the fifteenth century onwards began to experience a new view of life. I think we must regard it as due, in the main, to the revival of interest in the methods of Greek free thought, coupled with the maturing of the Nordic peoples of Northern Europe, the opening up of the new world, the rise of the Copernican Astronomy, and the decay of the belief in an immediate dissolution of life upon the planet. Protestantism in its genesis belongs, as Troeltsch truly observes, to the mediaeval world, although in this one respect it abandoned the mediaeval view by giving up the conception of two grades of human life, and making all life equally the service of God. The English book of Common Prayer contains not a single reference to the two standards of life, natural and supernatural,⁷ and it is significant that the new Deposited Book has repaired this omission by redrafting the Preface to the Marriage Service, so that it now runs, 'Such persons as are not called to remain unmarried' instead of 'Such persons as had not the gift of continency.' But early Protestantism was still interested in Soteria. Luther simplified the means whereby Soteria was obtained, but his main interest is in the inner experience of the free grace of God which makes guilty and despairing men happy and blessed with the assurance of salvation. The emphasis is on preparation for the next world. The Protestant Minister quite as much as the Catholic Priest is a sky-pilot. There is nothing new in this. What was new was the revived zest in life, not, I think, derived from early Protestantism, which set men studying to explore,

⁶ Keyserling, vol. 1, Reisetagebuch, p. 234 (Dent's trans.).

⁷ Nor does that exceedingly popular manual, *The Whole Duty of Man*. On the other hand, *Law's Serious Call* does, and actually quotes the passage from Eusebius to which I have referred.

analyse, and even transform their *environment*, and later to try to transform *themselves* by education and eugenics. Where this zest prevailed, the idea of renouncing the world ceased to be a matter of great concern.

It is worth noting that the East is now tending to receive this new attitude to life from the West—witness the present trend of events in Afghanistan, and the policy of (especially) American missionaries in India. I think especially of the attempt described in Mr. Higginbottom's *The Gospel and the Plough* to introduce modern scientific machinery into a South Indian village.

But Protestantism had its own view of renunciation, deriving rather from Calvin than from Luther, and this selection of experience, while it definitely included the married state, excluded many other elements in what might be called 'the full life,' such, for example, as lavish colour and pageantry, the drama, travel, and the liberal study of literature. I am thinking specially of the scheme of life presented to us in such a book as *The Christian Directory* of Richard Baxter. To most critics its chief defect seems to lie in its over-emphasis upon industry. It is not surprising that, as it has been pithily observed, 'the virtuous Protestant inevitably made money.' He did this partly, no doubt, because of his honesty which led men to trade with him, but we must remember that the connection between Calvinism and Capitalism was not merely a matter of honest dealing, but of the actual belief of the elect that it was their duty to increase and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it, that the saints should judge the world, and that the ideal man was typified rather by Abraham (or shall we say Job after his restoration to prosperity), the righteous man who had riches and plenteousness in his house, whose horn was exalted with honour, and who lived in patriarchal dignity, surrounded by sons and daughters, workmen, and prentices, menservants and maidservants, and even negro slaves! The community of the sect-type which found itself desirous of fleeing from the world still existed, and our thoughts naturally turn to the Moravians of Herrnhut, and perhaps to the tiny circle of Nicholas Ferrar at Little Gidding, or to William Law in his Hertfordshire parish. Like the monks of the Catholic Church, however, these communities soon found

that in order to exist they had to trade with the wicked world and so earn their keep (even if it was only by artistic book-binding), while the integrity of the Quakers led them to amass fortunes willy-nilly. Law of course demoralized his neighbours by indiscriminate almsgiving.

The Counter-Reformation stemmed the tide of Protestantism, and preserved the Catholic ideal upon the Continent, and it is worth remembering the fact that the Roman Catholic Church is still the largest single organized body of Christians and that of the other two great Episcopal bodies, the Eastern Church still retains the monastic orders (though I gather that they are diminishing in numbers), while the Anglican Communion has done much in the last hundred years to revive them, especially for mission work at home and abroad.

We have then the spectacle of a large part of Christendom adhering substantially to the view of life set forth in Eusebius, while the Protestant world, in so far as it is consistently opposed to Catholic ideals, dismisses the notion of a life based on the so-called evangelical counsels, and allows only one level of human activities, on the basis of which each individual is free to make his or her own selection, guided by temperament or vocation as the case may be, but in no case actuated by the impulse to abandon the life of the ordinary tax-paying citizen for that of the poor celibate, still less for that of the contemplative recluse. I omit any reference to the world-transforming activities of modern Christianity, as these are to be the subject of a separate paper.

So much then for the first of our questions, *i.e.* as to the successive Christian reactions to the experiences of life.

The second question is more difficult. What ought to be the reaction of Christianity to the experiences of life, if it is to be true to its own intrinsic nature? Some will say no doubt that the world-renouncing attitude, in the sense of its being a preferential selection of an experience which detaches the soul to the maximum extent from life in the world, is never under any circumstances justifiable. They will never, as they say, 'praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue.' Even these, however, unless they are sheer undisciplined hedonists, will advocate some grading in the selection of experiences, and will probably com-

mend a frugal and abstemious life in which the higher faculties are kept bright and keen to do their work by a sparing use of luxuries and a rigid discipline of 'brother ass.' Moreover, all Protestants are not agreed upon an optimistic view of the world and its activities. I quote from the recent utterances of a well-known French pastor, Wilfred Monod :

'If the world were in a normal state it would be possible to justify quiescence, luxury, art for art's sake, the piety which is cognisant only of the soul and Heaven; but in a world where everyone cannot satisfy his hunger, the real question for the disciples of Him who gave Himself to be crucified is not to know in what measure they may allow themselves lawful things, but in what measure they ought to sacrifice them . . . Some suggest use without abuse in a balanced moderation, but moderation and restraint are not the virtues exacted on a burning ship. Embarked on a civilisation on the brink of the abyss, Christians must form themselves into a salvage corps.'

A more extreme view still would be that of Pastor Barth, whose opinions reflect the extreme pessimism of the post-war years, and who has abandoned all hope for the present world-order, and urges men to flee from it in the spirit of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, as from a city of destruction in which the spiritual man can have neither part nor lot. This is Sektentypus with a vengeance!

Granted that Jesus Himself did not follow the extreme methods of John the Baptist, and that His followers tended to advocate the ascetic life more than He did Himself, it is certainly untrue to say that with no form of the ascetic ideal had He any sympathy. We cannot, as has already been said, entirely eliminate such sayings as those about 'selling all that we have,' or about 'cutting off the hand' or 'plucking out the eye.' Granted that detachment and proportion have their place in His teaching, He is certainly clear in His assertion that those who seek the Kingdom must be ready if need arise to surrender everything. 'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all that he hath.' The great experience of the Kingdom is worth all other experiences—nay it even includes them (or they will follow on its trail). It profits nothing if a man gain the whole world and lose his soul; and wealth, prosperity, and worldly security certainly have the effect of deceiving men as to their true position. The law of self-sacrifice lies at the very heart of the Christian message. Jesus does not say that the world and

all that it contains is evil. On the contrary, He calls the world and its contents 'God's good gifts to man.' But He does teach that anything that stands between a man and the fulfilment of his vocation must be renounced. Now vocations vary. The inward call to the contemplative may, I believe, be as real as the inward call to the motor mechanic, but I think that it is exceedingly rare, and that some who have thought they heard it only heard their own craven hearts calling them to run away from sharing the burdens of life. I suggest that we need a few pure contemplatives, but not many. We need far more urgently a numerous body of exponents of the art of simple, frugal and purposive living, in an age which has almost lost it and is racing aimlessly along, clogged with secularities, and hopelessly in bondage to the sin of philarguria. We cannot, however, make success in this art depend, as the Greeks tried to do, on the existence of a slave class.

It has been asserted that Christianity was in the past accepted by multitudes because in it they felt they found an escape from their own animal impulses which they feared, and that those who suppose it intellectually untenable are now waking, as they think, in the dawn of a new renaissance, only to discover themselves back again under the tyranny of the beast within them. Most of us, I hope, dislike the advocacy of religion as a mere brake upon the wheel of life. We cannot sympathize with Dr. Broad in his readiness to permit the establishment of a series of myths (of which public discussion is forbidden) for the purpose of keeping the mass of mankind virtuous. But as Modern Churchmen we have a strong desire not to make the moral influence of religion unnecessarily weak by encumbering its intellectual expression with obsolete views of the universe. We do not wish the weaker brethren to be able to urge as an excuse for shaking off the moral yoke of Christ that it involves them in a capitulation of the reason, and I imagine that most of us see the very real danger that foolish persons will urge the imbecilities of fundamentalism and traditionalism as a pretext for lapsing into licentiousness. Modernists have, therefore, a moral duty to perform in commending the yoke of Christ as one to which no persons of goodwill need hesitate on grounds of intellectual honesty to submit.

The renunciatory element in a sane and balanced Christianity will be based upon a true rather than a deeply pessimistic estimate of the nature of man and his duty towards God. It will recognize his wonderful promise, but also his waywardness, his wilfulness, his lack of stability and attentiveness, his inherited weaknesses, and his perverted ingenuity for finding out new sorts of wickedness. Without giving way to a sin-obsession, or indulging in a Confucianist optimism, Christians will continue to be guided in their selection of experience less by the desire to spend the short span of their lives as profitably to themselves as possible than by a sober consideration of their own capacities and infirmities, and also of their own individual vocation. They will ask first, not the question 'What do I want to experience?' but the question, 'What does God call me to do?' They will also remember that each individual, each generation, each race, and probably the human race as a whole, has only a leasehold tenure of earthly life.

Not only does such a Christianity seem eminently fitted to be the guide of the new world which is to-day taking shape, but that world, in so far as it is choosing to dispense with it, can hardly make good its claim to be following the path of wise and steady progress.

I am not appearing here as the advocate of that particular type of Christianity which our President has consistently condemned, *i.e.* one which has become secularized and this-worldly, 'without salt or savour'; but I cannot feel satisfied that, of Troeltsch's well-known delineations (Church-type, sect-type, individualist-mystic type), the second and third represent the correct reaction of the average Christian to-day to the facts of earthly existence. To despair of the transformation of society, whether you are a detached mystic or the member of a Puritan sect, may be excusable, but it is difficult to call it admirable.

Some of us will remember the queer dream of Peter—not the apostle, but the young wounded officer in H. G. Wells's now almost forgotten post-war novel—in which he interviews the Lord God, seated in a little office, and the Lord God says to him, 'You don't like the world as it is. Very well. Then get to work and change it.' Without entirely agreeing with such

sentiments, I think we all need to take as our motto a saying the authorship of which I cannot trace :

‘The world is saved by the disappointed idealists who never cease to strive.’

In conclusion, I would plead for a favourable consideration of a type of renunciation which is perhaps less understood to-day than it used to be, *i.e.*, Substitutionary renunciation. It has two main varieties. The first, that which seeks to redeem others by a voluntary renunciation of an experience in which all cannot safely indulge, and chooses a narrower life for the sake of weaker brethren.⁸ The second, that which seeks to offer to God reparation for injuries done to Him, and voluntarily imposes upon itself a life of austerity as an affectionate attempt to compensate for the undutifulness, the selfishness, and the brutality of others.

Both these varieties of renunciation have formed an important element in the history of the Christian religion, and no account of it would be complete without some reference to them. The first, which has its classic exponent in St. Paul (*Romans* xiv), has led to some of the finest flowers of Christian character, involving the disciplined lives of parents, pastors and teachers, mission and rescue workers. The second, dating perhaps from the impulsive breaking by a certain sinner of a box of precious ointment, concerns the poetry rather than the prose of religion. It is the justification for the austerities of flagellants who cannot forget that their Lord was Himself scourged, and is the source of that Christian heroism which is the savour of life.⁹ The lover of Christ asks not ‘How little need I do in order to ensure safety?’ but ‘How much can I give up in order to show my gratitude to Him who loved me and gave Himself for me?’ As Monod beautifully says : ‘That worldly wisdom may be safely transcended is the Saints’ magic gift to mankind.’

⁸ I heartily agree with Dr. Major that all renunciatory discipline is enhanced by being freely self-imposed, and that it loses in value when it is imposed on us by an external authority.

⁹ I wish carefully to distinguish between that type of self-immolation described in the life of Father Doyle, S.J. (in which God seems to be regarded as a monster who demands a certain quantum of suffering from his creatures) and the austerities of one who, loving God as a child its mother, seeks to comfort her for the undutifulness of another child by some exceptional act of self-denial or self-discipline.

CHRISTIANITY AS WORLD-ACCEPTING

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THE writer who accepts the ungrateful task of delineating and illustrating 'the world-accepting or mundane aspect of Christianity' must pursue a course unattended by honours or applause. A stringent self-denying ordinance forbids him to include within the province of his pen the sublime achievements of Christianity in the heroism of its martyrs, the austerities of its ascetics, and the miracles of its saints. A more melancholy story awaits his unfolding. He must discover that inevitable mixture of worldliness and corruption which Christianity has 'contracted in a long residence upon earth, among a weak and degenerate race of beings.' Compared with the splendours of the *civitas Dei*, his picture is of the squalor of the *grande latrocinium*. But if his vocation be thus humble, it should be void of offence. Although, as Gibbon justly observes, 'the great law of impartiality too often obliges us to reveal the imperfections of the uninspired teachers and believers of the Gospel,' it is only to a careless observer that 'their faults seem to cast a shade on the faith which they professed.' Indeed, in this present secularized age of easy tolerance, the spectacle of a materialistic Christianity may provoke neither the scandal of the pious Christian nor the fallacious triumph of the infidel. For whilst the unbeliever, like Gallio, cares for none of these things, the devout champion of spiritual autonomy finds in them but proof conclusive that the Civil Establishment of Christianity is the only foe of true religion.

It is difficult to trace the tradition of world-acceptance in Christianity to its source. If we could return to the allegorical method of Biblical exegesis beloved of the ancients, we might see in the request of the sons of Zebedee in the Gospels, that they might sit at their Master's right and left hand in the Messianic kingdom, a prophetic anticipation of the claim to the two swords of human government, which the mediaeval papacy and

empire contested so long. At least we may regard it as expressing the Jewish expectation that the Messiah would restore the kingdom to Israel. But the swift and stern rebuke which the disciples' ambition evoked, made clear the conviction of their Lord that His kingdom was not after the pattern of earthly kingdoms. Nor does the New Testament in general depart from this attitude. The fervent eschatological hopes of the early Church prevented the growth of a world-accepting philosophy, and when this pristine enthusiasm gradually failed, the Johannean writings show already the first stages of the necessary, if impossible, task of emphasizing the distinction between the Church and the World, lest the little communities of believers should be absorbed in the pagan society by which they were surrounded. In the New Testament, therefore, there is but slight evidence of a world-accepting attitude, save in the conduct of the baser sort of the Corinthian converts, who, being all things to all men, combined their new profession of Christianity with the practices of their pagan past.

St. Paul indeed, in his respect for the Roman Empire, and his conception of its Justice as a minister of God for good, points the way to a reconciliation between religion and the State. His careful foundation of Christian societies at strategic centres in the Empire shows a statesmanlike prescience of the future relations between the two powers, but the time was premature for the proposal of a *pactum unionis*. Instead the sporadic persecutions of Christians by certain of the emperors arrested the development of St. Paul's line of thought, and substituted a tradition of hostility between the Empire and the Church. The indications of friendly relations are still the exception rather than the rule in the Christian writings of the early centuries. On the more complaisant side a spirit of world-acceptance was born in the hearts of those afflicted Christians who interpreted literally the evangelical precept, 'when they persecute you in one city, flee to the next,' and so evaded the glory of martyrdom. More edifying and penetrating was the appeal of Melito, who argued from the coincidence of the foundation of the Empire and of the Church at the same period that God had intended them mutually to support each other, and that this had been recognized by the majority of the emperors, only Nero and

Domitian having persecuted the Christians. Such an apologia, addressed to the Emperor Marcus Aurelius in the last quarter of the second century, was still in advance of the general sentiment.¹ Its argument could not hope for acceptance until the possibility of persecution, even sporadically, had been removed. The victory of the world-accepting tradition in the Church could not be achieved until the Edict of Milan had signified the adoption of Christianity as the official creed of the Emperor Constantine.

‘The gratitude of the Church has exalted the virtues and excused the failings of a generous patron, who seated Christianity on the throne of the Roman world.’²

The verdict of Gibbon would need modification in modern days, in which there are not lacking voices to maintain that the Edict of Milan marked the end of the Christian, and the beginning of the Cæsarian Church. But all historians would agree that the conversion of Constantine had results in the sphere of *haute politique* no less potent than in the private forum of the imperial conscience. The Emperor’s patronage of the Church was no empty responsibility. Constantine intended the spiritual society to constitute a powerful force setting forward the unity of his dominions; and to that end he determined to deliver it from the disruptive theological controversies which were paralysing its effective action. The meaning of the alliance was revealed to Christian and pagan alike, when, in the spring of 325, in obedience to a decree of the Emperor convoking a general council, and ‘with an order for the use of post-horses and a competent allowance for the expenses of their journey,’ prelates of churches in east and west began their pilgrimage to Nicaea in Bithynia. The council, when assembled, was not unmindful on its part of the respect which it owed to the Emperor, who dignified its deliberations by participating in them; and Constantine in turn evinced the resoluteness of his purpose by adopting the conciliar decisions as the standard of official orthodoxy, and expelling from their sees Eusebius of Nicomedia and the Bishop of Nicaea itself, when they rekindled the embers of the Arian controversy. The important part played by Constantine in the

¹ Eusebius : *Hist. Eccles.* Book IV, Cap. 26.

² Gibbon : *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ed. Bury. Vol. II, p. 311.

history of the Nicene Council has been summarized succinctly by Duchesne :

*' C'était son concile à lui ; il y avait assisté, il l'avait même un peu dirigé ; il s'y tint résolument. '*³

In the stormy centuries of theological controversy which followed, the precedent set by the first Christian Cæsar was faithfully copied. The Empire having espoused the cause of Christianity, incurred the responsibility of deciding which of the contending sects represented the authentic tradition of doctrine, to which the imperial protection and support should be given. Emperors summoned councils, took an intimate share in their labours and in the determination of their programme, and even intervened in the framing of theological definitions no less than in the election of bishops. Hence the age of oecumenical councils which gave to the Church its classical statements of theology.

*' The progress of time and superstition erased the memory of the weakness, the passion, and the ignorance which disgraced these ecclesiastical synods ; and the Catholic world has unanimously submitted to the infallible decrees of the General Councils. '*⁴

It is possible — and Gibbon himself may not escape censure for the failing — to exaggerate the partisanship and passion of certain of the bishops, and to minimize the value of their theological definitions. But the very circumstance of the summons of the Councils bore witness to the completeness of the victory of the world-accepting tradition in the Church. Christ and Cæsar had been reconciled when Constantine made a gracious reply to the salutation of the bishops assembled at the opening session of the Council of Nicaea.

*' La religion chrétienne devint la religion de l'empereur, non seulement en ce sens qu'elle était professée par lui, mais en ce sens qu'elle était dirigée par lui. Tel n'est pas le droit, telle n'est pas la théorie, mais tel est le fait. '*⁵

II.

Within a century of the issue of the Edict of Milan, Rome itself had suffered capture and pillage by Alaric the Goth. The secular convulsion which we call the *Völkerwanderung* resulted in the disintegration and break-up of the Roman Empire. The

³ Duchesne : *Histoire Ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. II, p. 157. 4th ed., 1910.

⁴ Gibbon : *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 329.

⁵ Duchesne : *op. cit.*, p. 661.

foundation of Constantinople by the first Christian Emperor had marked the beginning of the division of the Empire into East and West, which was accelerated by the progress of the barbarian invasions, and which defied the temporary restoration of unity effected by Justinian. The Western Empire, deprived of the possibility of effective help from the East, gradually crumbled before the attacks of the invaders. The influence of these events upon the Church was profound. The respective positions of the Church and the Civil Power were reversed. The collapse of the Empire which had adopted and protected it, laid upon the Church the task of conserving what could be saved of Roman administration and culture, and of baptizing the barbarian races into civilization and Christianity.

The acceptance of this responsibility emphasized the conflict within the Church itself between the world-renouncing and the world-accepting traditions. The ideal which the spiritual society set before itself of fashioning out of the warring barbarian principates a veritable *respublica Christiana* led inevitably to the secularization of the Church. Churchmen could not undertake the conversion of the kingdoms of this world into the *regnum Dei* without insensibly identifying the Kingdom of God with the Catholic Church and perverting that into a temporal principedom. In reaction against this tendency, the ascetic spirit of monasticism revolted in a series of revivals, intended by their leaders to assert the principle of world-renunciation, but sinking after the quenching of pristine enthusiasm into wealthy ecclesiastical corporations, immersed in secular business rather than in the cultivation of the religious life. The history of the mediaeval Church may be read in the record of the conflict between the two traditions, struggling for mastery within its womb. The victory lay ultimately with the world-accepting principle, and of this victory the supreme symbol was the rise of the Papal monarchy.

The reconciliation of Christianity with the powers of this world has nowhere been more perfectly consummated than in the skilful diplomacy by which the fortunes of the Papacy have been moulded. The development of the absolute monarchy of Rome is perhaps the most surprising result of the permeation of the Graeco-Roman Empire by a religion which was in origin

a sect of Judaism. But the roots of this greatest of mediaeval institutions are found more in the political traditions of imperial Rome than in the religious *milieu* of Galilee; its title deeds are the Donation of Constantine and the Pseudo-Isidore rather than the disputed Petrine texts of the New Testament. An English philosopher has described the Papacy incisively as 'no other than the ghost of the deceased Roman Empire sitting crowned upon the grave thereof.' The Bishops of Rome stepped into the place left desolate by the Emperors, and assumed to themselves the prestige of their patrons. With the progressive consolidation of their position the triumph of the world-accepting principle in the Church was assured.

It is unnecessary to trace the stages by which the imposing edifice of the Papal Supremacy was built up, or to determine the exact influence exercised by the various elements, political and religious, upon which it rested. The importance of the process is that the resultant of this complex of interests was the rise of an institution of double character: at once the Spiritual Head of an Universal Church and an independent Temporal Principedom. It is of course reasonable to contend that, granted the actual conditions of contemporary civilization, the spiritual monarchy could not have existed without an accompanying temporal power. If the Church were to essay the realization of its ideal of an universal *Respublica Christiana*, then a judicial system and an organized administration were necessary, and the Church must become a political society. It may be granted that, from this standpoint, the evolution of the Papal Curia was inevitable. But this only serves to emphasize the completeness of the triumph of the world-accepting tradition; and from the perversion of the Papacy into a temporal principedom resulted the age-long conflict with the Empire, which was itself the prelude to the fall of the Universal Church.

According to the earliest mediaeval theory, indeed, conflict between Papacy and Empire was impossible. 'God is represented by the Pope not in every capacity, but only as ruler of spirits in heaven; as sovereign of earth, God issues His commission directly to the Emperor. Opposition between two servants of the same King is inconceivable, each being bound to aid and foster the other: the co-operation of both being needed

in all that concerns the welfare of Christendom at large.' But in practical affairs their interests frequently clashed, and the circumstance that the Holy Roman Empire was but a phantom creation, unsupported by financial or military strength beyond the resources of individual Emperors, gave the Papacy a powerful advantage. The contest of these two powers, co-equal and co-eternal according to mediaeval theories, was the most important cause of the progressive degeneracy of the spiritual Monarchy into the position of an Italian temporal sovereign, striving chiefly to secure its independence and superiority in the petty politics of the peninsula. Christianity as represented by the Papal Curia in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries had gone far to sell its spiritual birthright for the miserable pottage of an Italian dominion.

At least it must be stated that the Popes did not shrink from either the theoretical or practical logic of their policy. Nothing could be more uncompromising, for example, than the assertion of Papal pretensions at their height in the famous Bull *Unam Sanctam* of Boniface VIII. 'Both swords, the spiritual and the temporal, therefore are in the power of the Church; the one indeed to be wielded for the Church, the other by the Church; the one by the hand of the priest, the other by the hand of kings and knights, but at the will and sufferance of the priest. One sword, moreover, ought to be under the other, and the temporal authority to be subjected to the spiritual.' The vigour of such assertions sprang largely from the bitter character of the conflicts between Popes and Emperors, which demanded from the pontiffs a practical policy of aggression, unhampered by scruples or by reluctance to embrace every means towards the destruction of their hated adversaries. From these contests came the demands for systematic taxation of the churches in the various kingdoms of Western Europe which made the avarice of the Roman Curia a byword throughout Christendom. The financial appetite of the Papacy provides perhaps the best example of the corrupting influence of the world-accepting principle in the mediaeval Church.

More than a fair share of the task of meeting the papal necessities fell upon England during the reign of Henry III on the one side and the pontificates of Gregory IX and Inno-

cent IV on the other. England lay in a position of peculiar dependence upon the Apostolic See both by reason of John's surrender of his kingdom to Innocent III, and in virtue of the undoubtedly beneficial services rendered to his young son, Henry, during the latter's minority, by the Papal legates Gualo and Pandulph. It was in fact the unbounded gratitude of Henry III to the Papacy which proved the undoing of his church and kingdom. During the pontificate of Honorius III in 1225, an attempt had already been made to appropriate in perpetuity for the benefit of the Curia two prebends from all cathedral and conventual churches, in order to remove the reproach of avarice from Rome, that *scandalum . . . et opprobrium vetustissimum*, which, the nuncio declared, was caused by the poverty of the Holy See.⁶ With the accession of the fiery Gregory IX, and the urgent necessity for money to finance his wars against the Emperor Frederick II, the demands became much more frequent and severe. In 1229 one of the Pope's chaplains came to England to demand a tax of one-tenth of all clerical property, to which the clergy had to submit, finding the new phenomenon of a tacit alliance of king and pontiff to plunder them. Direct taxation, however, was an instrument limited necessarily in potentiality and exercise. Gregory IX soon discovered a better means of securing money, by the simple expedient of providing for his Italian and other supporters out of the revenues of English benefices. Thus bishops were given lists of papal nominees, and were forbidden to fill the benefices in their patronage with Englishmen until these had been provided for. Nor were these exactions non-recurrent. The Papal needs increased with the continuance of the struggle against the Emperor. With the accession of Innocent IV in 1243, the scandals of papal financial trafficking became greater in magnitude as well as in number. In 1246 the Pope asked for half of the ecclesiastical revenues of England, whilst four years later Henry III took the crusader's oath, proceeding thereupon to tax the clergy further, nominally for his crusade, but in reality to meet the demands of Rome. A wide extension was given by the papal agents not only to the scope of 'crusading'

⁶ Roger of Wendover : *Flores Historiarum*, Vol. II, p. 296. (Rolls Series.)

expeditions, but also to the practice of the commutation of oaths for cash payments. The war against the Pope's political enemies partook of the nature of a crusade, and crusading vows were accepted from the aged and infirm in order to their commutation on the morrow for money. In England the crisis was reached when Henry III foolishly accepted the Sicilian crown for his second son Edmund, including the obligation to meet the Pope's debts and to pay the cost of expeditions undertaken solely in the papal interest. Throughout the long reign of Henry III, England was indeed the milch-cow of the Papacy, submitting to a long series of papal demands and interference in the ecclesiastical affairs of the realm. Of the latter interference it will suffice to mention that upon the death of Langton in 1228, Gregory IX refused the candidates both of the king and of the Canterbury monks, appointing to the see himself, without pretence of an election, by virtue of the *plenitudo potestatis* inherent in his office; and again in 1231, on the death of his nominee, the same Pope quashed three successive elections to the archiepiscopate, including that of Ralph Neville, Bishop of Chichester, Chancellor and a royal favourite, thus causing a vacancy of three years before the Christ Church monks present in Rome were persuaded to elect a person approved by himself.

But if England suffered from the exaction and interference of the Popes, in Europe the contest between the Papacy and the Hohenstaufen house brought disaster and extinction to the imperial line, and prepared the way for the complete collapse of the prestige of the Universal Monarchy of the Church. Innocent IV's intrigues in regard to the possession of Sicily revealed the true end of the temporal principedom of the Papacy. There was seen the fatal logic by which

'it was argued that the head of this spiritual Empire must be also a temporal ruler, first of the actual city of the Seven Hills, then of the Latin and Sabine dominions adjoining the patrimony of St. Peter; then of the provinces of Spoleto, Ancona, Romagna, and even Tuscany; and finally of all South Italy and Sicily too.'⁷

From the defeat of Frederick II to the victory which avenged him, that of Philip IV of France against Boniface VIII, was but an interval of half a century. The failure of Boniface marked the fall of the mediaeval Papacy, the result of the fatal

⁷ A. L. Smith: *Church and State in the Middle Ages*, p. 210.

mistake 'of endeavouring to build religion into a state organization, to make the heavenly city into an earthly city,' above all to base spiritual authority upon the possession of temporal power.

'The Papal States were a veritable body of death to the true spiritual life of the greatest institution in human history.'

III.

It would be erroneous, however, to suppose that corruption and worldliness were the peculiar property or weakness of the mediaeval Papacy. The Reformation delivered England from many abuses and superstitions, but it would be incorrect to include amongst its benefits the exorcism of the spirit of world-acceptance from the subsequent history of the Church of England. Indeed the predominantly Erastian character of the Tudor Reformation settlement has seemed to some to make that Church the least spiritual and independent of the Reformed Churches. It has been questioned in our own day whether the dominion of the Papal Cæsar may not be preferable to the light yoke of the Royal Supremacy. But in speaking of the Reformation it is well at the outset to make plain to which movement the term has reference. The Church of England has suffered two reformations, of which the later, a result of the Whig reforming enthusiasm in the second generation of the nineteenth century, makes the Tudor experiment seem conservative and modest by comparison. For the wisdom of the sixteenth century left intact by far the greater part of the mediaeval administrative machinery of the National Church, which survived with many of its congenial abuses, until the Radicals of the nineteenth century laid violent hands upon the ecclesiastical constitution. The true history of the Reformed Church of England, therefore, lies between the limits of the Tudor conservatism and the Whig revolutionary changes. Of this interval, the sixteenth century was necessarily one of unsettlement and uncertainty; its successor, the seventeenth, was distinguished by two revolutions, involving the execution of one king and the expulsion of another, which convulsions in the body politic produced corresponding disturbance in the ecclesiastical corporation. It was

not until the Revolution Settlement of 1689 had been firmly established that the English Church was able peaceably to garner the fruits of its reformation.

The eighteenth century represents most completely the practical working of the constitution of the Reformed Church of England. Happily for itself it had shed the acute dogmatism and combativeness of the preceding centuries; equally fortunately for its peculiar genius the era of revolution was yet below the horizon. Yet despite its many virtues, no century has been more deeply maligned. It is not unprofitable to direct attention to its history to illustrate the influence of the world-accepting tradition in the Church of England before the Whig deluge. Nor will the enquiry lack consolatory compensations. It will bring to an end upon a note of approval a paper of peculiarly opprobrious character, since those who are most sensitive to suggestions of corruption in the Ages of Faith are rejoiced to whisper scandal of the Century of Common-sense.

The nepotism and pluralism which are commonly quoted as the peculiar reproach of the eighteenth century can boast a most respectable pedigree. From the coming of Augustine to England, Christianity in this island has been susceptible to the influence of the world-accepting principle. The early bishops were primarily royal chaplains, developing later into royal counsellors, when the Saxon heptarchy gave place to a single national kingdom. They were possessors of great estates, tenants in chief of the Crown; and in the central period of the Middle Ages, bishops were commonly raised to that order as the reward of faithful service in the king's household and administration. The protest of Wyclif against the Cæsarian clergy found ready argument from the career of such prelates as William of Wykeham, who had laid the foundation of his ecclesiastical preferment in his diligent discharge of the secular business of the Crown. The tradition that bishops were statesmen as well as ecclesiastics, maintained on the eve of the Reformation in the person and massive pluralism of Wolsey, was not broken by the Tudor changes. After the Reformation as before it, bishops continued to enjoy the confidence and to direct the policies of kings. Towards the end of the Stuart era, however, there occurred a new development in the political situation

which altered profoundly the position of the episcopate. The emergence of two rival political parties, of Whig and Tory, who contested the control of the king's administration, wrought an insensible change in the relation of the bishops to the Crown. Hitherto they had been royal counsellors; henceforth they became allies of the leaders of the rival parties, sharing the secrets and supporting the projects, not of the king personally, but of the party of their adhesion and his confidence.

With this circumstance there arose new possibilities of worldliness in the negotiations of prelates and ministers. In particular the episcopal votes in the House of Lords were of the greatest value to the party managers; they were not inconsiderable in number when divisions were critical; and the influence of their Lordships did not cease within the Upper Chamber itself. In a period when the pulpit was still the chief instrument of popular instruction, the politics of the bishop influenced considerably those of the county, and the favours of the bishop and his clergy were much canvassed at elections. The party leaders prized greatly their control of ecclesiastical patronage, and expected political loyalty from the recipients of their bounty. The eighteenth century was the golden age of the Whig oligarchy; and the best testimony to the influence of the Church was given when Walpole, the leader of the party of traditional Dissenting sympathies, formed his alliance with Gibson to secure the tuning of the universities and the pulpits. Closely related to the parliamentary influence of the bishops was the circumstance of episcopal pluralism. The apostolic injunction to exercise hospitality was one which the eighteenth century prelate was most conscientious to fulfil, but the expense of which bore heavily upon the occupants of the poorer sees. The value of English bishoprics varied enormously from the traditional wealth of Durham or Winchester to literal poverty of the Henry VIII foundations, or of the Welsh sees which offered a pittance and did not attract residence. In consequence the indigent bishops needed commendams to enable them to bear the expense of their office, whilst they lived in hope of translation to a more lucrative diocese. Their anticipation of further preferment was a powerful instrument in the hands of the political leaders, who were accustomed to reward their clergy with smaller bishoprics, as

an earnest of further favours to come and a test of the firmness of their Whig and Tory principles.

From the circumstance of the new relation between the ministry and the episcopate, which had grown naturally out of the establishment of two political parties, arose the propensity to intrigue and jobbery, which forms the chief charge against the eighteenth century church, though the scandals were by no means peculiar either to that church or century. Upon the debate in the House of Commons in 1731 for leave to introduce a Bill to prevent the translation of bishops, a Whig member argued :

‘ That the Scripture says a bishop should be the husband of one wife, meaning that he should stick to one bishoprick; and this Bill would oblige him to be chaste and give his wife due benevolence, that is, reside in his diocese. Whereas the bishops are now universally guilty of spiritual adultery, looking after other men’s wives, that is their bishopricks, and forsaking their lawful beds in not residing.’

In reply the defenders of the episcopate championed the world-accepting principle by affirming

‘ That to take away the only reward of their merit in writing against infidelity and setting a bright example, which is preferring them by translation to a better bishoprick, would be destroying all learning.’

It is undeniable that the development of party government increased greatly the ecclesiastical influence exercised by the political ministers. The administration of the important patronage of the Crown, together with the diversion into party channels of the extensive preferment in the gift of the Lord Chancellor, offered illimitable opportunities for political manipulation. A contemporary description of the Duke of Newcastle in 1754, by a cleric not without worldly ambitions himself, gives the classic portrait of the wire-pulling minister.

‘ The Minister himself is the Factotum in ecclesiastical affairs, and a sweet manager he is, for what with the last election, and his pitiful passion for the Chancellorship of Cambridge, he has involved himself in promises of church preferments to the greatest degree of perplexity. . . . He torments the poor Archbishop of Canterbury for everything that falls in his gift, so that if a thing drops, he is forced to give it away the moment he is informed of it, for fear of the Duke of Newcastle. Ely gives him everything (they say, by bargain) : Chichester Peterborough, Durham, Gloucester, Salisbury, etc., are slaves to him in this respect. . . . As to Lord Chancellor, it is a kind of bargain made with every one that enters upon that high office, “that the Minister shall dispose of most of the church preferments in his gift.” ’⁸

⁸ E. Pyle : *Memoirs of a Royal Chaplain*, ed. Hartshorne, p. 218.

Not unnaturally some of the clergy who received such promotion were themselves distinctly innocent of the world-renouncing character. Benjamin Hoadly passed with remarkable rapidity through a series of ecclesiastical preferments, becoming Bishop of Bangor in 1716, being translated to Hereford in 1721, to Salisbury in 1723 and to Winchester in 1734. The rapidity of his promotion hardly allowed him to make the acquaintance of his first two bishoprics. When he settled down to enjoy the revenues of Winchester, he lived the greater part of the year at his town house in Chelsea, where his dinners of ten dishes caused his friend Edmund Pyle seriously to apprehend 'the danger . . . from the table, which was most plentiful and elegant.' Nor was Pyle unworthy to share the episcopal companionship, for his own account of his installation as Archdeacon of York belongs to the tradition of world-acceptance in its most literal interpretation :

'I had like to have lost my heart at York,' he wrote to a clerical friend, 'it is a terrible thing to have such a place in the church as I have; nothing but ladies by the dozens (and very pretty ones) on the right hand or the left, or in front of my stall. But through mercy, having the service to read, I was forced to look, at least, as much upon the rubrick of the book as upon that of their cheeks ! So I am returned safe and sound.'⁹

IV.

The eighteenth century was essentially the pre-Reform era; its digestion was adequate to its alleged abuses, which evoked sporadic rather than sustained criticism in the first half of the century. After the outbreak of the French Revolution, the very abuses were sanctified by reason of their antiquity, and the Church continued unreformed and unconscious of the need of reformation. The times of ignorance were winked at, but with the Whig *régime* after 1830 a new wind of revolution stirred the political arena. Parliament undertook a thorough-going reorganization of ecclesiastical revenues and administration, which carried away the last traces of dignified pluralism. To Keble the work was sacrilege, because undertaken by the Whigs. None the less it was well and truly performed. The golden prebends of Durham and of St. Paul's lost their fabulous riches; the wealthy bishoprics were mulcted to increase the value of the

⁹ Pyle : *Memoirs*, p. 168.

poorer; pluralities and non-residence virtually disappeared; the financial administration of the revenues of the Church was vested in the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, its jurisdiction given over to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council as the final court of appeal. Little was left for the Victorian Church save the virtue of *quiet* worldliness; the epoch of real world-acceptance had passed away. The typical eighteenth century prelate also ceased to exist after the vigorous personality of Wilberforce of Oxford had introduced the ideal of the pastoral bishop. In this present century still less occasion for worldliness remains, save in the conviction that efficient bureaucracy will usher in the Kingdom of God.

It is difficult, however, to exalt the tradition of world-acceptance into a principle of consistent policy. Its development was stifled successively by the eschatological hope in the Apostolic Age and by the conflicts with the Empire which ensued. But when the Church had accepted the existing world-order as comparatively stable and enduring, the influence of the world-accepting tradition became evident. Its presence may be traced in some form in all ages of the Christian Church. More particularly in the examples which have been given here, the danger has been implicit in the fulfilment of its vocation, granted the conditions of contemporary civilization. If the mediaeval Church were to essay the task of teaching the Barbarians, the taint of corruption and worldliness was almost inevitable. In England the close connection of Church and State from the earliest times has been provocative of perpetual denunciation from world-renouncing reformers. It is unjust to study the effect of the world-accepting tradition alone, since it cannot exist in isolation. Just as the laconic epitaph of a monastic chronicler upon a contemporary bishop, that he was *omnium virorum religiosorum inimicus*, seems too simple to explain a complex and influential character, so with charges of unrelieved worldliness levelled against churches or centuries. A modicum of world-acceptance is as necessary to the welfare of the church as to the health of the ordinary individual. Grave injustice is done to individuals, societies and epochs by dismissing them with the contemptuous censure that they forsook the practice of true Christianity, having, like Demas, loved this present world.

CHRISTIANITY AS WORLD-REDEEMING

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OUR subject to-night is the world-transforming or world-redeeming aspect of Christianity. We have already looked at it as world-renouncing and as world-accepting. What is this Christianity? Can one and the same religion turn to us such different faces? The Christianity that can must be a very uncertain quantity, or a very subtle spirit. 'Christianity,' 'world,' 'redeeming'—all our terms are fluid and ambiguous. Yet I shall not begin by attempting to define them. They all describe processes. It is something going on all the time with which we have to deal. We can never allow the question, Has Christianity redeemed the world? It is always what it is doing, is beginning to do, that concerns us. And whatever we have to say about it as regards the world of our experience, we cannot forget that for Christianity life in this world for each of us is only the first stage of an experience which is not to be completed or fully understood in this world, but hereafter, above, beyond. There is always 'the hope which is laid up for us in the heavens' (*Col. i, 5*). 'Man partly is, and wholly hopes to be.' *We go on.* Death is a transition to more experience. 'Christianity' as it has been is shot through with this conviction. I shall not have in view in this paper any 'Christianity' that ignores it, or the parallel conviction that the Christian's association with the historical Jesus Christ is a personal relationship to a living spirit and itself a living fact, felt as the enjoyment of the *χάρις* of God. Our general subject is 'Christianity in History.' What has been the impact of Christianity on the world? Has it been redemptive in the past, is it now, and does it promise to be in the future?

If we pursued our enquiry on purely historical lines, we should not be concerned to deny redemptive value to other religions, nor should we admit the epigram that Christianity was unique among them because the salvation it offered was salvation from sin: for every religion had its inhibitions, its *tabus*,

its sins, and its characteristic remedies. What we should of course note is how the Christian conception of sin differed from theirs; what inwardness it had, so that a man might do nothing sinful and yet himself be sinful through and through: he might even do 'virtuous' acts without being virtuous. All religions of redemption offer ways of obtaining the favour of the lord of their mysteries, their god. Christianity differed from others in its conception of God and His relation to man, and the kind of life and character He desired in men.

We may read much Greek and Latin literature and history without being struck by any profound differences of attitude and conduct from what has been common among Christians, just as we may read much modern literature and find nothing Christian in it. Of course it is otherwise when you look below the surface and go to the details of daily life. Such a writer as Mrs. Naomi Mitchison is among those who have caught the atmosphere and put their readers in it. She shews the inhumanities and horrors of a high civilization untouched by Christianity. There is such a thing as a pagan outlook; and there are pagan ideas, and institutions which reflect and sanction and support them. It is the missionary of to-day in India, Africa and elsewhere who can best appreciate the difference and its effects on life; and we semi-Christianized stay-at-homes can learn from him how profound the difference is. In Christian countries, alike within the Church and outside it, wherever this pagan outlook and its superstitions and practices still survive with primitive ideas of *mana* and *tabu*, it is in a mitigated form, and in defiance of other ideas generally held by Christians.

If we followed, then, the lines of historical enquiry, we should note what particular ideas and customs and practices of the established order early Christians found offensive to them; how their moral standards of life differed from those of the non-Christian world of that time; how they arrived at a new orientation and organization of life within their own groups. We should not depreciate the moral value of the social order established in the Roman Empire on the ground that every society condemns what it regards as injurious to itself; nor would the theology of the Incarnation allow us to think of the virtues of the heathen as splendid sins, not pleasing to God. Nor should we be right in supposing that vices like arrogance, dis-

honesty and cruelty, or people like thieves and cowards and murderers, were any more approved in the old world than they have been by Christians. But we should note that from the beginning Christianity set up a different scale of values from that which was accepted in the world. It was almost as though the Christian scale must be as different as possible from current standards. All the emphasis was put on qualities in least esteem at the time, like humility, chastity, mercy, pity for the poor and helpless, self-denying service of others.

They have all been traced back to the conception of the Father-God of all mankind equally concerned for every member of the one great family, if specially the guardian of those who called on Him as Father and owned allegiance to the Son He had sent to reveal Him and save the world. From this conviction came the new sense of the sanctity of human life and of the worth, the personal individual worth, of man as man, and the imperative duty of love of the brethren and respect for all men. So we get the new type of character in which the sense of dependence and humility is blended with the sense of personal dignity.

Continuing our historical enquiry, we should have to appraise the character of the Church-directed civilization which replaced that of the Roman Empire, and we should weigh in our scales the redemptive ingredients in the whole system of beliefs and institutions by which the Church presented Christianity to the world and sought to direct and control human life and thought. That system was for the time being the Christian religion, and the question would be whether its machinery — forms of constitution and government, rites and sacraments — helped towards the best life livable at the time and so served to promote values that are Christian. No doubt we should find some justification for the adverse views of critics of Christianity from Celsus to Gibbon and Lecky and Bury and all our modern experimentalists in ethics. The Church has had the weaknesses and faults of every other human institution. Nowhere is the travail of man more conspicuously shewn than in the history of the Church, in which the faults of individuals as well as their good qualities have been intensified by group suggestion. It is only one who makes claims for the Church that are inconsistent with anything we know of the way in which God works in the

world in this education of mankind, or if you like of the cosmic process, who has to labour his defence. I am not going to do this, nor, on the other hand, to enumerate its contributions to our Western civilization and the elevation and enrichment of life. Some of its most hostile critics have conceded its services in these respects, and everyone here is familiar with the facts. No one will forget that it is the Church itself that has preserved the standards by which it must be judged. It alone has kept in the world the memory of Jesus, the Christ idea and ideals, Christianity and its potentialities, all that the Christian religion may become. Has it been 'redemptive'?

In one sense of the phrase, 'the world' means the people living at the moment, and we should get some of the best evidence we could have from their answer to the question, Have you in your own experience found Christianity, as you understand it and in what you feel you get from it, 'redemptive'? May we turn to this kind of evidence?

It was in an experience felt to be redemptive that Christianity as a religion originated. It promised a glory in the future with which the afflictions of the present order were not to be compared, and the glory-that-was-to-be cast its light on things as they were. It was a religion for men and women who had to live their lives in their stations in the world in which it had pleased God to make Himself and His purpose known to them, and call them to the new faith and the new hope, by which they could live with a new direction of mind and heart while remaining in the conditions in which the call came to them. So all things became new, and they had the sense of a present redemption. They were conscious of a new status, a new orientation of themselves.

'So God loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life' (*Jn.* iii, 16). 'I came not to judge the world, but to save the world' (*Jn.* xii, 47), '... that they may have life, and have it in abundance' (*Jn.* x, 10). 'Who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love; in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins' (*Col.* i, 13, 14). 'God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners (*or*, in the same context, enemies) Christ died for us'

(*Rom.* v, 8). 'Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God' (*Rom.* v, 1). 'This grace wherein we stand' (*Rom.* v, 2). 'I can do all things in him that enableth me' (*Phil.* iv, 13). 'For freedom did Christ set us free' (*Gal.* v, 1). I take a few sayings almost at random: wherever you open the Epistles you come on them.

I suppose no religion has given its believers the same kind of sense of liberation from the conditions of the moment, and transcendence over what was inimical to them in their environment.

'O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me out of the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord' (*Rom.* vii, 24, 25). 'Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ' (*I Cor.* xv, 57). St. Paul is the first of whom we know to give fervent expression to this experience, and he remains the classical exponent of it. Here we are in touch with the heart of the Christian religion. It is something other than the teaching of Jesus; but Jesus, as depicted in the Gospels and interpreted by St. Paul, Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, has been the centre of an experience, comprehensive in its sweep, drawing into its net as it were all sorts of men and women in all kinds of conditions of life and culture, which has been to them emancipation, release from bondage.

There has been something amiss with the world and man, and somehow, through what Jesus was and did, it has been put right. What He was and did were world and man redeeming, once for all time and all mankind.

It is out of analysis of this fact of experience, in relation to current conceptions of the world and man and God, that the doctrines of Sin and Atonement and Grace which have been counted Christian were shaped. What was it from which they were redeemed? Our descriptions of all experience depend on our mental furniture and all our varying complexes (as we call them now). We know the descriptions given by Christians in the past, and how large an influence ideas of Heaven and Hell had on them. We know how strong the sin-obsession was, and how large a part in creating it the *Genesis* story had—the belief that at the beginning all was well with the world and man in his garden of Eden, and that all that he counted evil in the world

and himself was his own fault. The primitive science implied in that story of Paradise lost could hold its own almost to our own days, though Epicurus and Lucretius knew better. Now we know that from the beginning man has had to fight his way to everything that we count of value; we know that, considering all the odds against him, his gradual progress from his animal origin in a very awful environment has been an achievement highly creditable to the human race. It bears wonderful witness to the enterprise and courage and endurance and resourcefulness, the patience and sacrifice and hopefulness, of individuals; and we cannot put the whole race under the ban. Before ever there was a Christian religion, there were these high qualities and virtues in the world and beautiful fruits of human comradeship and love. If it was a great experiment of an all-wise and loving God, with whom 'a thousand years are as a watch in the night'; the process, starting from nothing, had not been a failure.

We must get right away from the type of mythological rationalization of which the story of the Fall is an example, if our account of things is to ring true to-day. Christianity marks not a miraculous reversal of the process of the world and transformation of human nature, but the quickening of perception of its meaning and the sense of power to shape life to the end disclosed in Jesus Christ. 'Whereas I was blind, now I see' (*Jn.* ix, 25). 'I can do all things in him that enableth me' (*Phil.* iv, 13).

As to the process itself that is redemptive we may prefer to use other terms to-day — terms drawn from what we know of the factors and processes that make us from moment to moment what we are, all of them at once both spiritual and physical. We may speak of primitive instincts and inhibitions and repressions, or of the gradual sublimation of those instincts by the turning of all the energy of them that is not needed for the primary purposes they serve to the satisfaction of needs equally natural, though only dimly discerned by man in the early stages of his evolution and not then clearly known as of higher value. So the self that must be preserved becomes the higher self for which the lower must be sacrificed and, it may be, the loneliness of some of the great 'masters of their souls' incurred. So the craving for physical union with another becomes more and more the desire to give yourself, to share with another all that you have and are, and may become the stimulus of creative

genius that explores the resources and draws out the treasures of the world, or else the passion for union with God. So, too, the primitive urge to keep with the crowd for your own safety, and be loyal to your own particular group, may become the will — at any cost to yourself — to promote the good of mankind, the something greater than patriotism, the larger loyalty to the whole to which you belong.

In terms like these we can, if we like, describe the experience Christians have had and felt to be redeeming. They have known that they had to work out their own salvation, but they have believed that it was God working in them, and that the way of it was faith in God and their being moulded to the likeness of Christ — having Him formed within them. It is the way the evolution of man has proceeded, and it is well described as the redemption of the soul as well as of the body, neither apart from the other. And history shews that as regards individuals the redemptive experience of the early days of the religion has been renewed again and again. The *gesta Christi* in this sense form a glorious roll of achievement, written in the secret history of humdrum lives as well as in memoirs that can be read of men and women who sought to conform themselves to what they believed He would have them be, and in doing so found the way to freedom opened out to them.

Where the sin-obsession was tumultuous, the reaction was the stronger; but the experience was not on that account more Christian. Jesus certainly sought to liberate men's minds from fear of the sacred and unseen and turn them to the God of Love and trust in Him. 'Grant, we beseech thee, O merciful Lord, to thy faithful people pardon and peace, that they may be cleansed from all their sins, and serve thee with a quiet mind.' That prayer reflects the characteristic Christian experience — the sense of pardon, peace, the quiet mind: freedom to follow the way undisturbed and to pick it up again when for a time it has been lost.

But this experience is personal and was apprehended rather as redemption in and from the world and its inevitable conditions. In what sense, then, is Christianity *world*-redeeming? Wherever we note a moral advance of social life and institutions promoted by Christians we may see this world-redeemingness in action. Yet one of the most striking features of the

Christian experience we have had in mind has been indifference to the economic and social conditions of the world. Christianity has even been charged with inducing passivity and acquiescence in evils in the world that could be removed. The very trust in Providence which it engenders has discouraged the output of human effort to control the external conditions of life: they were the 'will' of God, and exceptional disasters were 'acts' of God.

When the slave, questioned by the Roman magistrate as to his status, made answer 'I am a Christian,' it was no bravado nor any evasion that was intended. It was the spontaneous expression of the assurance that the status of Christian superseded and swallowed up the distinctions of the social and economic order of the world.

The Faith of the Incarnation might be destined to eat away the very foundations of the existing structure of society and inaugurate a new civilization, as it may yet do with ours: but in early days there was little direct attack on that order as such. There was abstention from customs connected with pagan worship and practices regarded as immoral; there was non-conformity and passive resistance. And ever after, when we speak of Christianity as world-redeeming and can point to many an attempt to regulate personal morality and the use of property and some of the conditions of industry and government, there has been, I think, no grandiose scheme for the reconstruction of the social order on a new and permanent basis, and Christians in general have felt that 'the fashion of this world passeth away' and have not conceived the kingdom of God as an economic polity to be realized on earth.

In one of its meanings 'the world' is all the people in it at any moment, and then we are back again at the redemption of the individual. But Christianity has shewn its world-redemptive character in that the personal call of the individual to a personal relationship to God and Christ has been at the same time a call to membership of a body that has believed itself to be vivified and sustained by the Spirit of Christ and of God, and destined to include all the races of the world and be the means of organizing all mankind for the realization of its highest life.

In 'world-renouncing' and 'world-accepting' we understand that what is meant is a definite attitude to the whole environ-

ment of human life and its normal activities and interests. Ought the Christian to feel himself an alien and a stranger in a hostile country and make his alienation as complete as possible, concentrating all his concern on a country above and beyond? Or ought he rather to feel himself at home in the universe that confronts him and enter fully into all the experiences of life as they crowd upon him, confident that it is God's world and that he must not evade any of the dangers or miss any of the opportunities, any of the joys and sorrows and hopes and fears, even the desolations and agonies, that the fullest participation in its affairs and affections can involve?

There is clearly no redemption of the world if its value be denied and you withdraw yourself from its ordinary life as no concern of yours, or if, so far as you must engage in its affairs and in this sense 'accept' the world, you regard them with indifference and retire into the inner sanctuary of your being. No concentration on another world can be redemptive of this world : it is only a way of escape from the world for yourself.

Nor is the humanism of the other way of facing life in the world in itself redemptive of the world for you. There is not in it the transcendence that marks the Christian experience, that Christian slave's sense of a different status, the sense of being raised above your present environment, of another world or order to which you belong, an invisible, spiritual, eternal order. It is too much like laying up for yourself treasure upon the earth only. It does not clearly envisage the ideal of getting the best of both worlds which ought to inspire Christian life based on belief in the Incarnation.

The primitive Christian belief that there is an 'outside' and a 'beyond' to which also we belong and to which in a future life we may attain, another world that even here impinges on this world, gives us the prayer 'that we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal.' But I think that prayer is spoilt for us to-day by its 'finally,' and that it never did represent the redemptive experience that is most characteristically Christian. The Christian has always felt himself to be already in touch with the things eternal. It may be directly 'by faith,' through the affinity with them that his association of himself with Christ effects, or it may be through sacraments believed to link together the two orders, conceived as the

natural and the supernatural, and be the means by which the material was transfigured by the spiritual. Somehow the powers of the world to come were already capable of working in this world, and in his own experience the Christian had foretastes of them. For him at least contact was already established. The chasm between the two orders was bridged.

But something more than a bridge is wanted to redeem the world. The religion of the Incarnation means more than that, and has meant more as regards what we call the natural order; and the evolutionist revelation of our own times helps us to enter more fully into its meaning. The religion of the Incarnation, and the Johannine Gospel in which it is expressed in terms of that age, suggests to us a more comprehensive conception. And the evolutionist revelation of this age confirms the main idea, even when interpreted by Mr. Julian Huxley as offering us a religion without revelation and shewing us God as the creation of the human mind in the exercise of its power of organizing and unifying the facts of experience. For it shews us that, apart from anything that can be divined as outside the universe, it is by the call of our own nature and the nature of the universe, to which we are organic, that we are urged to the realization of a spiritual order here and now. It is while we are in the thick of the things temporal, not outside them but in them and by them, through the whole environment in which we live, through all the interests and activities and all the affections and afflictions of the earthly life, that we have manifested to us the invisible and eternal. It is when we recognize that there is this spiritual order within the world that the world for us is redeemed.

But we must go further than this. The new knowledge which modern science has given us helps us to understand that our doctrine of Incarnation, the embodiment of the Divine fulness in a single Man, extends to the whole natural order in the sense that it is an embodiment of spirit which finds in man an organ of itself capable of becoming a more conscious and complete expression than any other part of the universe can be.

Is there then a redemption of the world itself in progress? Can it be redeemed except in us? — not only for us, but in us.

It was Lotze, I think, who spoke of the universe as first becoming articulate in man; and the same thought is expressed in the saying that man is the means by which the universe is

making itself known. To-day we know that one and the same energy is active throughout it, finding different forms of expression. This store of energy within it is working apparently without direction. But in organic life, even at its lower stages, students of its processes to-day detect something like incipient consciousness of need and direction towards its satisfaction by use of whatever means of supply are at hand; so that the organism is built up as if there was knowledge of its possibilities. In man not only is this consciousness highly developed and a far wider range of possibilities opened out to him, but there has grown up the sense that beyond anything that can be seen there is an end to which the whole process is tending; that he can divine at least the direction of this end; and, furthermore, that it is somehow in him and through him that the end is to be attained. The world itself, the whole order of Nature, is to reach its consummation thus.

‘Consummation’? Yes, that is Christian. But from the religious point of view till the end is attained there is something amiss, something that hinders, and from that deliverance is needed. That the world itself is in need of redemption is a Christian idea. We see it in the popular picture of a great transformation scene at the end of things, and the new heaven and the new earth. But above all there is the impressive utterance of St. Paul (*Rom.* viii, 18 ff): ‘For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity (and that by no volition or fault of its own, but according to plan—the whole scheme of things) in hope [that is, with a view to the realization of the scheme]; because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain with us until now.’ How evolutionist it is!

That it was no mere passing fantasy or emotional outburst on the part of St. Paul, but his reasoned view of the universe, is shown by his insistence elsewhere on the cosmic creative significance of Christ, in whom and through whom and unto whom all things were created and in whom all things consist (*Col.* i, 16, 17), through whom the whole fulness of God was pleased to reconcile all things to himself (*Col.* i, 19, 20)—all which is his

equivalent of the Johannine idea of Christ as the embodiment of the formula of creation, and so the key to the meaning of the whole and the exponent of its purpose and true values.

So by way of personification he represents the whole cosmic process as working up to an end that is the manifestation of a higher order of being than it has yet produced. One Son of God was already manifested. The trend of the whole creation was to the ultimate output of a race of sons of God. The universe was big with that great brood, longing to be delivered.

If this be poetry, we may remember the saying that poetry is 'the vehicle by which reality makes more of itself known' and the poet is he who 'gets more of reality out of reality' than others do.

It is as though the universe and man were together engaged in a common task, or as though the universe attained to consciousness in man and he was the means by which its potentialities could become actual.

The deliverance is the achievement of the end, dimly divined, but already in Christ made manifest, which the cosmic process serves. And it is suggested that there are in the world itself resources waiting for liberation, to be used as they have not been for the end in view. The opportunity is there, is given. It needs to be redeemed, bought up, put to the best use it can serve. This is a Christian view of the world and its redemption: all the resources of the world to be used for the output of the sons of God. They are there, waiting for release. During the last hundred years, by the patient work of a whole army of students and the insight and imagination of the masters of the new science, they have been released amazingly. The real nature of the world and of man and their possibilities have been disclosed as never before. We must take all this into account in considering the redemption of the world. 'The truth shall make you free,' however it comes to you. We must look to this new science for guidance as to *how* to order our lives, not only for the betterment of the conditions of the present and the enrichment of life here, for spirit and mind as well as body, which it has already given, but also for the help it promises to enable man to direct the course of human evolution by control of the powers inherent in the world.

It is idle to decry these possibilities. Not all of them may

be realized as what seemed to be the fairy-land fancies of Jules Verne have been. There may be extravagances like those that Sir Philip Gibbs has pourtrayed in *The Age of Reason*. There are dangers such as the author of *Number 85* describes: Can man be trusted to use such powers for good and not for evil?

Science, strictly speaking, is of course entirely neutral in these matters. What it has been furnishing so richly is knowledge of the factors of the universe, and of methods by which they can be used by man. This is a release of them, but whether it becomes such a redemption of creation as St. Paul imagined or not depends on the direction given to them by man. In the past undoubtedly it is lack of science from which mankind has suffered most, and the science of to-day provides remedies against the evils it makes possible. What above all else it shews us is that the advance of man has always been by the way of directing his animal instincts to the service of the spiritual factors of his nature. This has been age by age his redemption. So it must be with the whole order of Nature. Here the religion of the Incarnation makes its decisive affirmation. By 'sons of God' I suppose we mean beings with higher perception of the things of the spirit, more knowledge, more interest in truth, a finer sense of what is beautiful and what is good — fitter organs of all these values than men are to-day. And modern science will be redemptive of the world so far as the use of its resources tends to the production of this higher type of being.

Through its means one of the chief Christian affirmations, the solidarity of humanity, is being impressed on the world as never before. Mankind is coming to know that it is true that 'if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it.' There is a mass movement in the direction of 'brotherhood.' The human race in the course of its long experience seems to be deciding for itself that 'the things which belong unto peace' (*Lk.* xix, 42) are to be won by pursuing the 'impracticable' ideals of the Gospel. In the present conditions of human society it is the scale of values commonly called Christian, in distinction from what is commonly called 'pagan,' that delimits the line of human progress. And in all the inevitable mystery and pain of life, it is still the story of the Cross and Resurrection, and the religion of the Incarnation, that creates the experience that is redemptive.

THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS CHRIST

By the REVEREND J. S. BEZZANT, M.A., Chaplain of Exeter College and Vice-Principal of Ripon Hall, Oxford.

AS a personage of history who lived in the first century of the era that is named after him, what kind of authority has Jesus Christ for men in the present century? It is, and will remain, the fundamental question for thoughtful men who would profess and call themselves Christians. We may assert that in the Christian religion the final authority is that of the living Christ and of his spirit as manifested in the Church, or in the believer's heart; but that assertion presupposes, as hitherto it has presupposed, belief in the real existence of and in certain propositions about one Jesus who is the Christ. Apart from this belief and these propositions, or some of them, men may claim the authority of the living Christ; but of justification for so naming it there could be little: of necessity there would be none.

It is, therefore, of the greatest significance in our enquiry about the authority of Jesus Christ, to observe that, at the present time, opinion as to the facts of his earthly life is in considerable confusion. There is something like a deadlock in hypotheses. It is widely thought that the methods of a scientific literary and historical criticism have completed their useful work, and can take us no nearer towards an agreed solution. It is said that criticism can do no more than take us back to a date about thirty years removed from the actual events, and that the intervening gap offered as good a field for the growth of ancient legend as for modern conjecture, so that we can have no certainty at all that any passage in the Synoptic Gospels existed in precisely its present form earlier than 60 A.D., if indeed as early. The words of a scholar in a paper read before the Oxford Society of Historical Theology express a widespread opinion:

'All you have is someone else's recollection years after (let us suppose St. Peter's) of what he had understood at the time Jesus so say, and that reported by a third person (let us suppose St. Mark) perhaps many years after he had heard St. Peter discourse, and translated from Aramaic into Greek.'

This explains the feeling that the interest of the minute study

of particular turns of phrase in the Gospels is, for purposes of constructive theology, more than counter-balanced by its futility, its usefulness having ended with the passing of belief in a verbally inspired text. Nor is it remarkable that Dr. Rawlinson's Bampton Lectures on the New Testament Doctrine of the Christ contain no account of the Christology of the Synoptic Gospels.

Thus the glory of the Liberal Protestant effort to set forth Jesus the Man as he lived among men has departed. The historical Jesus is at a discount. The picture of him as evidently set forth among us at more than one of these Conferences is nowadays widely regarded, in Schweitzer's picturesque words, as 'a figure designed by rationalism, endowed with life by liberalism, and clothed by modern theology in a historical garb.' In other words, we may know something of primitive Christian thought about Jesus, but him we know not. If this is to any large degree true, there is plainly no sense in asking what authority the earthly Jesus can have: any authority ascribed to him as such is only euphemistically his.

Personally I believe this latest modern fashion to be almost entirely wrong. If it is true it will mean the eventual elimination of the historical foundation of the Christian faith; Christianity will remain a historical religion only in the sense that it has had a history. We shall also be robbed of one of the best tests by which theological speculation can be kept sane. Now this phase of modern opinion is, in the main, due to two factors. The first is the conviction that Liberal criticism eliminated much from the recorded life of Jesus without any historical warrant; in particular, that it woefully minimized the significance of eschatology. Schweitzer, it is held, was largely right in his estimate of the importance of this element in the Gospels, though it need not be, and ought not to be, interpreted with the rather crude literalism characteristic of Schweitzer's work. It seems to restore Christ's supernatural claims which Liberalism had so largely taken away.

This position cannot here be fully examined, but some general criticisms which seem to me to be fatal to it can be briefly stated.

(a) It is matter of history that primitive Christians interpreted eschatology in a crudely literal sense. They also believed that Jesus had been seen alive after his passion. Put these two facts

together and we have all the data we need to explain the early Christological belief. But the eschatology, one of the main constituents in the basis of primitive belief was, in the event, proved erroneous. The supposedly supernatural element was clearly, in form, a delusion. If Jesus shared the opinions of his earliest disciples, the saner and more permanent elements in Christianity come from another source. Gloze the facts as you will, Jesus remains deluded. The position is desperate. Hence the eschatology of Jesus must at all costs be allegorized, or, if we prefer sound and sentiment to sense, let us say spiritualized. For of what avail is it to show that from the first Jesus was accepted and worshipped as the consummation of Israel's hope, if that hope, as it actually existed, was in fact illusory?

(b) But there neither are, nor can be, any *a priori* grounds on which we may legitimately interpret the eschatology of the Gospels in any other than its natural sense. The main argument for the eschatological interpretation of the Gospels is not derived from literary and historical criticism; it rather consists in the claim that the eschatology, interpreted literally, supplies the key which renders intelligible the otherwise inexplicable development of events in the Gospels. If then this element is allegorized, it no longer performs the intelligible service which is its main justification. The main plank in the objective argument is taken away. If, then, we are to interpret the eschatology allegorically, *we must have some real justification for doing so*. To proceed to do so gratuitously, without compelling reasons, is a piece of modernizing more flagrant than any of which Liberal Protestantism has been guilty. If it is admitted that the form of our Lord's thought about himself was all wrong while being in substance profoundly true, we must face the fact of the magnitude of his error; for such a distinction between the form and the substance of thought is, in experience, never found. It is, in fact, the twentieth century theologian who has discovered the truth which the Master knew only in an erroneous form. The disciple is greater than his lord.

(c) Next, it is frequently asserted, by those who maintain the fundamental importance of the supernatural eschatology, that Jesus was not primarily a great prophetic ethical teacher. We

are thus invited to believe that the greatness of Jesus consists not in that which was unique about him, but in the commonplaces which he shared with his contemporaries and is supposed to have applied to himself. Is it likely? What ground is there (particularly if the eschatology be allegorized) for the assumption that the ethical teaching must be interpreted in the darkness of the eschatology? Why not the eschatology in the light of the ethical teaching? Does not this alone supply the justification for allegorizing it which we need? Such justification the ethical teaching does afford only if it is historically due to Jesus. The historical problem remains.

The second factor contributing to the modern lack of interest in the Jesus of history is in essence fundamentally the same. It consists in the claim that if we would arrive at any true understanding of the Gospels we must approach them with the Christ-*muthos* already in mind; that is to say, we must come to them with a predisposition to believe that God and the world are such that it is likely that one came down from heaven, was made man, suffered, died and rose again for the salvation of the world. This *muthos*, it is said, is so interwoven in the Gospel narrative of fact that we cannot possibly get a picture of Jesus which is free from it. Again, some criticisms may be briefly noted.

(a) There is in fact much in the Gospels which bears no traces of having been created or moulded by the Christ-*muthos*. The value placed on the personality and teaching of Jesus while on earth may be modern. It is, nevertheless, based on the actual contents of the Gospels. If the early Church was unconscious of it, this element in the Gospel portrait is certainly less a product of the Christ-*muthos* than something which has survived in spite of it. If it was not used as apologetic, we have all the more reason to trust it as history.

(b) It is admittedly true that it makes all the difference in a man's attitude towards Christianity whether his view of the world is such that he thinks an incarnation to be probable or otherwise: it is quite another thing to suggest that he should believe the specific form that probability has assumed in the Christ-*muthos* to be true before he has critically studied the

alleged classical example thereof. In any case, unless he cares nothing for history, his antecedent mental attitude can only affect his bias of probability; if an incarnation be probable, it by no means follows that we know in advance what form it would take. If we did know, Jesus would be merely an illustrative appendix to a great religious truth of which we were already sufficiently assured without him: if we do not know, then our only hope is to have recourse to a severely critical study of what claims to be the unique historical example of the Christ-*muthos*. The historical problem remains.

We may therefore conclude that the factors which tend towards indifference to the life of Jesus do not, in fact, allow of any escape whatever from the historical problem. For the theology of the future this problem will prove fundamental and determinative. It may be true that religion is more concerned with eternal truth than with its temporal manifestations; but the two cannot be separated, and in this state of our existence the way to the eternal lies in and through the temporal. Whatever criticisms may be made of the Liberal Protestant 'Lives of Jesus,' the Liberal Protestant attitude to history is the only one which will maintain Christianity as a historical religion, or Jesus as in any way central in it.

Now it is both logically and historically necessary that Jesus himself should have been such as to explain the impression made by him, and why men have come to believe that they see the light of the knowledge of the glory of God revealed in him. And the great essentials of his life and message, permeated by one spirit, are actually in the pages of the Gospels, however they got there. We also know much of the preconceptions in the minds of those who came to believe him to be Messiah and Lord. Is there the slightest reason to-day, more than there ever was, to make it likely that the Gospel portrait is the creation of a group—of a school of disciples? Allow for the influence of the Christ-*muthos* as much as you will, or disregard it; leave the eschatology in the Gospels and estimate it as you choose; even so it will remain true that the *bulk* of the teaching attributed to Jesus appeals to us with a power of self-authentication not to be found elsewhere. Admit that Liberal Protestant critics found only a nineteenth century moralist in him. The assertion, if

treated as an argument, begs the whole question at issue. These critics may have modernized Jesus overmuch, but if there is anything eternal in him and in his teaching, he and it will be easily adaptable to the best in the outlook of every age. The eternal is not unhistorical because of its eternally modern appearance.

If, then, we know enough of Jesus to make it reasonable to ask about his authority for us, what is the nature of that authority? The answer is quite definite. It is axiomatic that, to whatever extent a man may be responsible for the fact that his conscience informs him as it does, he is, nevertheless, not to be justified if he acts in conflict with his conscience. *The only authority to which absolute obedience is due is the call of God, unmistakably heard.* This limits every other authority; and unquestioning obedience to any other external authority whatsoever, without recognition of the limitations of such authority, is a mark of the corruption of religion. We cannot deny that this type of external authority has been prominent in religion. It has been exercised in the name of Jesus. He knew it well. It is all the more remarkable that there is no evidence that he ever claimed this type of authority for himself. It was the backbone of the institutional religion of his day, and he rejected it. Scribal and Pharisæical religion was based on this sort of authority, and depended on it. Jesus taught as one having authority, but not as the Scribes: it is precisely the impression which his recorded teaching still creates in us. And the difference between his authority and that of the Scribes was that his teaching was immediately self-authenticating, whereas theirs was not. Theirs was a form of truth transmitted with scrupulous accuracy; their form of truth was co-extensive with the truth itself; they denied the power thereof in that, though they undoubtedly wished people to feel its truth, they ignored the fact that this can only be effectively secured by committing the truth unreservedly to the proof of personal experience of its reality. They taught upon authority: Jesus taught with authority. An impassable gulf divides the two.

It is the fashion among those who think we can know little of Jesus as he actually lived, to attempt to bolster a case against critical reconstructions of his ministry by stressing the differences in the portraits of Jesus as they are sketched by those who

treat the Gospels as historical documents. The difficulty may be frankly admitted. But it is almost entirely a theoretical one. It is true that there are differences, and serious differences, between the historical Jesus as portrayed by this critic and by that. But the greatness of the Personality is there and it cannot be got rid of. One man esteemeth one aspect above another; none esteemeth every aspect alike. It is the more remarkable that, in spite of the differences, the general character of Jesus, his teaching and his spirit, we can ascertain. Its individuality, its challenging boldness, its unity of spirit, stamp it as most certainly not a collection of different opinions held by various individuals between 30 and 70 A.D. Allowing for all legendary modifications and accretions, it is a fairly homogeneous whole coming from one teacher of immense spiritual power. Whatever may be the final verdict upon the Gospel miracles, of what sort they were and what the measure of their improbability, the judgment is likely to remain that we have a solid nucleus of mighty works done by Jesus. They support the impression received from the teaching, which really needs no such support, that we have to do with a strong and incalculable personality. If the miracles that are otherwise cannot be hid, criticism, which cannot proceed without some presuppositions, can easily account for their presence in the narratives on no more irrational or arbitrary assumptions than those justified by the bulk of the miracle stories themselves, and by other acts and words of Jesus. The miracles related of him are in striking contrast to those of earlier and later miracle-mongering; they chiefly reveal a desire to lessen human misery, and are absolutely in harmony with the spirit and teaching of Jesus. Thus, the authority of Jesus for us lies in the fact that both he and his teaching have to do with what, in every time and place, is fundamental and central in man, namely, his relation to the universe, to his fellow men and to God. Christ's revelation, in deed and in word, of the nature of God as the Father of love is unique in emphasis, extent and application. It is unthinkable that, in one who lived continuously in the realized presence of God, his thought of God was anything less than the fundamental thing in the light of which all else must be understood. Teaching a way of life as filial trust in God, he also lived it. Much that is of value and

even necessary for the good of human life is not to be found either in his life or in his teaching; nevertheless, in the actual circumstances of his own earthly life, he both lived out and taught the central purpose of life, into relation with which *all* else, if it would realize its full potentialities, must be brought. Even the eschatology of the Gospels, if literally interpreted, would not entirely invalidate this claim. To 'live this day as if thy last' would not affect the validity of any of the inspiring principles of the ethic of Jesus, though it might lead us more readily to give our coats to those who would take away our cloaks than perhaps rightly, certainly actually, we are willing to do. His inspiring principles of truth and love, righteousness and mercy, remain constant whether the end be near or far. In revealing to men their true nature as sons in relation to God as Father, and the true motives of human conduct, Jesus has revealed those unchanging things which men most need to know. Without them, religion, though it might retain its *mysterium*, its *tremendum* and its *fascinans*, would become either an aesthetic luxury or a sedative for use in the sick rooms of life, or even a positive power for evil. Herein, then, consists the authority of Jesus. If we wish to live nobly, the way is in him, and he can inspire the wish. He never asked men to accept what he said because he said it; and we to-day do not believe his teaching because he gave it, but we believe in him because he was and said these things. His appeal was, and is, to conscience and to reason. The truth of an ideal is always a matter of immediate judgment; it cannot, in the scientific sense, be 'proved.' Its truth must always depend on the solemn Amen which it awakens in our hearts. For the absence of this, no other tests or arguments for his adequacy will quite make up. It is his sense of the nearness and of the reality of God, conjoined with that altogether holy will which left the impression (unconsciously conveyed by the Gospels, and certainly not deliberately created) that in him is no sin, which brings us into the presence of God when we meet Jesus. Thus his authority consists in the fact that he brings us face to face with the only conceivable ultimate authority. He does not, by word of command, force the human mind, for in the last resort, that simply cannot be done. His authority is the natural power of life over life; it

has no fixed and arbitrary centre or mode of expression; the authority of Christ for any man must depend on the human level to which he has attained. We may talk as we will of the necessity of 'givenness' and objectivity in religion, and of the dangers of subjectivity, but all the talk in the world does not change the evident fact that it is in the individual heart that religion must establish its strength and its certainties if it is to have any effective measure of either. The only authority is that which will so establish it; of such is the authority of Jesus Christ, for the only reason why we accept his authority is the reason why we think it right to do so.

It does not follow that the authority of Jesus can be claimed for any theological formulae, even if he had enunciated any such. Just as grace is both God and God's gift, so that when God gives us grace he gives us Himself, and yet grace in us does not ensure our sinlessness, in the same way the fact of the indwelling of God in Christ carries with it no guarantee of his intellectual infallibility. This he never claimed either for himself or for the form of any statement he made. He took no pains to hand anything down in writing. A claim to divine authority for anything other than the great values of his revelation involves an assumption that his words were infallibly remembered, infallibly repeated for from thirty to fifty years, and then infallibly translated and handed down in an uncorrupted text. There are philosophies which are inconsistent with Jesus' revelation of the nature of God and man and of the true motives of human conduct; in as far as they are inconsistent with these values, Christians will believe them to be inadequate or false, and this attitude will remain capable of intellectual defence. On the other hand, a theological dogma can have no ultimate meaning outside the world-view in which it is set. Theologians must think out the implications of the Christian way of life; but attempts to make their decisions, however so many and weighty they be, either absolute revelations of truth or in form for ever thereafter unalterable, have no authority from Christ. Such decisions have no authority more divine than their own inherent reasonableness. There is no body of theological statement for which we have divine sanctions of approval or truth. If the Church has in past ages thought otherwise, the Church has been

wrong. It is an instance wherein frank confession of error is only less necessary than a new mind and a new spirit.

A word must be said about the contention that Jesus can have but little authority for us because the world of his earthly day was so different from ours. First, we do not receive identical impressions of his teaching from all the Gospels, any more than his hearers did from his words; thus, it is only from the Gospel of St. Luke that we learn that wealth and poverty loomed at all largely in his teaching. Secondly, he not only used vivid imagery, the details of which cannot be pressed, but he undoubtedly used hyperbole; thus, he certainly did not mean that, while loving our enemies, we must hate our parents if we would be his disciples indeed. Thirdly, and above all, no characteristic of our Lord's teaching has been more constantly noted than its inwardness, its spiritual freedom, and its emphasis on motive and intention. His sayings are principles and ideals, not laws, and it is both arbitrary and hopeless to treat some of them as laws to be imposed literally and others as unrealizable counsels of perfection. This point cannot be better illustrated than in Dr. Rashdall's words¹:

'Nobody ever could fulfil the commands of Christ merely as an act of obedience to external authority. How could you even try to love your neighbour as yourself merely because an external authority which you believed to be infallible has pronounced that it is the right thing to do? Not only could you not obey the commands of Christ: you could not even understand them, unless in some measure and to some extent your conscience went with them. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged."'

On any showing, the burden of Jesus' message was the Kingdom, or rather, the *Kingship* or *Rule*, of God; that is, a state in which God's will should be done, as in heaven so on earth. The sayings are ideals relative to that state—ideals realized in him, and which can only be realized fully when men live in the spiritual world as he did, while finding that world, as he found it, in the world of actual duty. He left it to his followers to determine the measure in which those ideals could be realized in any given set of ever changing circumstances. It is no valid criticism of the teaching of Jesus that its spirit cannot be applied to modern conditions unless it can be shewn that modern conditions are

¹ *Principles and Precepts*, p. 15.

already what they ought to be. In all his teaching Jesus appealed to conscience and assumed that his words would meet with an answering assent from within. We have no reason whatever to suppose he would wish his logia to have, as indeed they cannot have, any external impositional authority, unless they can be shewn to conscience to be applicable to present facts of life. They must commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. Finally, when we reflect how great an experience supports the reading of the meaning of life which we infer from the life and teaching of Jesus, when we occasionally find sayings and a tone which we could wish to be absent, we have to weigh the possibilities that he was misreported or misunderstood, whether the form of the logion is likely to have been influenced by his followers' own subsequent experiences, against that impression of the greatness of his personality which the Gospels in any case create. At the worst, we shall have to admit no more than that very occasionally our Lord *may* have fallen below his own highest level, a fact which is only discoverable in the light of that highest level. We are not committed to belief in his infallibility; of infallibilities there are none to be found within human experience. We are committed to the belief that in him we see the supreme unveiling of the nature of God. Other great teachers, both before and after him, there have undoubtedly been, but if anyone is persuaded that there has been a greater, it is his moral duty to reveal the fact to the world. It will never be done unless man discovers a more absolute motive for life than love.

It remains to consider briefly the authority which is believed to attach to certain 'Dominical institutions,' and its worth. Such institutions are the Church, the ministry, and the two sacraments of the Gospel. The available evidence that these were instituted by Jesus while on earth has been sifted many times, and there is no need to set it all out in detail again. Nothing new on one side or on the other has been recently adduced, and there is no reason to hope for more decisive evidence than already exists. The subject is discussed with reasonable fulness in *The Modern Churchman's* Conference Numbers for 1925 and 1926.² Let us

² See also the essay by Dr. N. P. Williams in *Essays, Catholic and Critical*.

admit the probability that the Lord's Supper was intended by Christ to be celebrated in remembrance of him : we cannot claim that the evidence is certainly strong enough to make doubt unreasonable. I do not see that any reasonable man can deny the fairness of Dr. Barnes' judgment that in anything attributable to Jesus only a frail foundation exists for the elaborate superstructure of obligation and doctrine which has been built upon it. Similarly, the probability seems to be that Jesus approved baptism as the seal of repentance securing admission into the circle of his followers; but only an entirely pre-critical attitude to Scripture can possibly support the belief that he commanded it on pain of eternal loss. Again, had Jesus contemplated a long future for his Church, and talked about it, his followers could not possibly have supposed that they had his authority for the eschatology they demonstrably held. The only passages which have any direct reference to a future ecclesiastical organization are found in the first Gospel, which has admittedly been coloured by the usages, traditions and ideas of the Jewish Christian Church in which it originated : to account for them we need suppose no more than a small exercise of the same mentality which could refer to Moses the legalism of late Judaism. But even taking these passages as they stand, the significance traditionally attached to them depends on a number of quite unjustifiable assumptions. Most of them, so far as we know, were addressed to the disciples at large, just as was the context in which they now appear. There is not a word to suggest that authority was given exclusively to the Twelve to transmit it only to some men; there is no direct word of Christ for any order of ministry or for the authority of 'the Church' over branches thereof; still less is there the smallest hint that a form of ministry once accepted by a majority, or even by all, was thereafter to be permanent. There is no promise of exclusive guidance to a majority of the Church in matters of doctrine or organization. It appears that Christ did give to the society of his followers a power of binding and loosing, that is, a final judgment in matters of right and wrong. But this, too, if it is to be harmonized with the spirit of Christ's teaching, or, in the light of its history, approved by conscience, must be regarded as applying to the ideal of society as he conceived it. The whole

position can hardly be summed up better than in the words of Dr. Rawlinson :

‘A close and critical examination of the New Testament documents is making it more and more difficult to conceive of the Master as having definitely and explicitly *legislated* upon this or any other matter, with regard to His future Church.’

This admission by no means disposes of the problem of the relation of the individual animated by the spirit of Christ to the Church as it has come to be; but it does dispose of the claim to Christ's authority for matters of the organization of institutional religion. Nor can such institutional and organizational doctrine which was originally dogmatically asserted on a historical basis, which is historically very doubtful, be dogmatically asserted on any other basis. While every society has its right to organize itself in the way best calculated to serve the realization of its ideals, it is altogether another thing to claim the authority of Jesus for the adopted organization. Nor can the matter ever be decided by a majority vote of the very people whose exclusive right to decide it is precisely the question at issue. Whereinsoever there is a probability that a rite was practised or sanctioned by our Lord, the Christian will be content to act on the principle of the saying ‘It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master.’ But he himself will hold, and do his utmost to induce the Church to hold, such doctrines about the significance of those rites as knowledge and experience lead reason and conscience to approve. Questions of the institutions of Christianity must be decided as the bases of respect for historical continuity, historical sentiment, utility, and that regard for the reasonable wishes of others which the spirit of Christianity enjoins upon us all. All claims to divine authority for them must be explicitly rejected. The practice of making the literal interpretation of some isolated sayings of Jesus the bases of elaborate doctrinal superstructures which attach marvellous consequences to the correct repetition of formulae, presupposes that external authority of texts which belongs only to an infallibly and verbally inspired Bible. The inevitable and quite reasonable doubts as to whether such logia were really uttered, whether we can discover their real meaning from the amount of context preserved, whether they were correctly remembered and

translated, or were intended literally or symbolically, is more than sufficient to inhibit all claim to our Lord's authority for superstructures reared upon them.

To sum up. It appears that the authority of Christ may be claimed by the Church (*a*) to determine its own organizational affairs; (*b*) to declare its conditions of membership and the required tenets of belief. The individual who feels these to involve a departure from the truth or from the spirit of Christ must do his utmost to change them, but, in the spirit of the Master, he must in the end accept whatever consequences attend the Church's refusal to listen. On the other hand, there is absolutely no authority of Christ for giving an inspired and final decision on any speculative doctrinal question. Of such authority there has been, is, and will be, none. In matters of right and wrong, in as far as the spirit of Christ dwells in the Church, there is an approximate authority to decide, but no absolute authority. The world will gain in knowledge of ethical and spiritual truth from the growing consensus of a genuinely Christian society. If, as Christianity declares, Christ personally survived death, his living spirit can animate the heart open to his guidance. His abiding authority consists in the fact of experience that when his life and ideals are not only pondered intellectually, but are set as the practical guide of human life, we attain a more worthy knowledge of God, and a greater value of life, than this world elsewhere affords. Those who ask for more are really asking for less.

THE FINALITY OF CHRISTIANITY

By the Rev. J. C. HARDWICK, M.A., B.Sc., Vicar of Partington.

RENAN, of whom Meredith said that he had more under his hat than any man in Europe, wrote that very few people are entitled to disbelieve the Christian religion. The wiser a man is, the more hesitating are his negations and the more qualified his affirmations. Lord Acton cited the case of the two famous London physicians who could not make up their minds on a case and reported dubiously. The patient's friends insisted on a positive opinion. The physicians' reply to this was that they themselves were unable to give one, but that fifty doctors might easily be found who could. In the same way there are plenty of people to tell us that the Christian religion is discredited. But what exactly is their opinion worth?

It would appear that for a religion to claim finality it must fulfil certain conditions, three of which appear to be the following :

(1) It must give full scope and expression to the fundamental religious instincts.

(2) It must be based upon a sound anthropology, *i.e.*, upon a view of human nature which is consistent with the facts of history and psychology.

(3) It must supply a theory of the universe which gives to human existence an adequate value and purpose.

We may consider these *seriatim*.

(1) According to the late William James, the types of religious experience may be reduced to two, that of the 'once-born' and that of the 'twice-born.' Although Christian theology was undoubtedly developed preponderantly by men whose experience was of the 'twice-born' type, *e.g.* St. Paul and St. Augustine, yet Christianity is a religion congenial to men of the 'once-born' type also. But whether Christian experience takes the one form or the other, in either case it is predominantly ethical both in source and inspiration.

In the case of the 'twice-born' this is obvious, since the new birth is the resolution of an ethical struggle. The old self,

involved in moral failure, is negated and regarded as no longer real. Reality is transferred to the new self, which is real 'in God.' There is the less need to elaborate a description of this type of religious experience here since St. Paul has given immortal expression to it. To labour the point of its being predominantly, even entirely, ethical in character, is unnecessary.

With regard to the 'once-born' type, though it may not be associated to the same extent with ethical struggle, yet it is associated with steady ethical development, both as concerns insight and behaviour. The Christian of this type finds peace and happiness in contemplating the divine goodness and in attempting to approximate towards it, unattainable as the goal may be.

Properly speaking, the two types are not essentially different. Both are developments of an inferior self into a better self; but the one is of the nature of a sudden 'mutation,' as biologists term it, while in the case of the other the transformation is more gradual. The points to notice are two.

(a) The Christian religion finds a place for both types of religious experience; or, as we should prefer to say, for both types of ethical and spiritual development.

(b) Christian religious experience is ethical in character. For Christianity, the ethical is the spiritual, and the spiritual the ethical. For Christian experience the ethical will is primary; religion is not a mere emotional ecstasy, emotion tinged, and very faintly tinged, with morality. Nor is it a mystic trance which can be induced by self-hypnosis or drugs. For the Christian, 'dying to live' is an absorption of the will in the divine will; not the submergence of consciousness in the unconscious Absolute.

The Christian religion is therefore (a) inclusive of different types, and (b) predominantly ethical in quality. These are both points of primary importance.

(2) With regard to the Christian anthropology, or view of human nature, this is closely bound up with Christian religious experience. It was observed above that the 'twice-born' type of experience had a predominant influence on theological development. St. Paul's experience laid down the lines along which Christian theology was to travel. Through St. Augustine

he shaped both Catholic and Protestant orthodoxy. Nor was it only the personal experience of St. Paul and St. Augustine that influenced theology; we have to take into consideration the preponderating tendency of thought which prevailed at the time when Christian theology was hardening into orthodoxy. It was a period characterized by sombre pessimism, which pervaded the pagan even more than the Christian world. Lucretius had banished the gods and substituted a Nature indifferent or hostile to man. The *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius preach a sad resignation; they breathe the spirit of one who labours patiently to postpone the inevitable ruin of civilization. Philosophers no less than Christians believed that the world was evil; and it required no great foresight to perceive that the end was near. It is sometimes forgotten that St. Augustine was a Manichean for whom matter and the flesh were evil; and, in spite of his conversion, he remained one to the end. All this was congenial to the minds of those who had inherited the Jewish doctrine of a Fall. The theological doctrine of Original Sin was an inevitable product of these factors; Christian anthropology became profoundly pessimistic.

Another cause contributed if not to the genesis yet to the elaboration and fortification of the doctrine. Ecclesiastical interests demanded it. If man were competent to work out his own salvation, where would be the need of a Church with its sacramental channels of supernatural grace? The lower the natural degradation of man, the deeper his need of a priesthood endowed with supernatural powers. 'Who will deliver me?' cried St. Paul. Catholicism supplied the answer: 'The sacraments of the Church.' On the Catholic theory these are the divinely ordained means of deliverance for fallen humanity; apart from these there is and can be no salvation.

With regard to human nature, we know too well that it has not attained perfection, nor have all the hopes been realised which were once placed in our increasing control over nature. Yet there seems small doubt that much modern pessimism is an affectation. There are few human beings that have not something to recommend them. There is much courage, patience, kindness in the world; and love grows everywhere, almost like a weed. The war is said to have displayed the infamy of our

race, its passion, cruelty, greed, ignorance. Such things certainly emerged. But, apart from those who made the war and profited from it, those who suffered in it, on whatever side they suffered, displayed many of the qualities of Christ.

And with regard to the origin of the race, although there has often been degeneration, anything in the nature of a Fall of the whole race must be regarded as mythical. Nor is the idea rendered more tenable or intelligible by pushing it back into some pre-mundane sphere; though here, to be sure, it is inaccessible to scientific and historical research.

With regard to the teaching of Jesus, it is true that a sense of sin, or 'repentance,' was an essential condition of entry into the Kingdom which He heralded. But a consciousness of moral weakness and failure, which is essential to religion, is not the same thing as, nor does it necessarily involve, the theological doctrine of Original Sin, the sources of which we have already indicated. Jesus, we may be sure, would have repudiated it, as He would have repudiated most other doctrines which subsequently became orthodox. Even if Jesus was in fact a pessimist about human nature, He differed radically from most who take that view, for whereas they despise and hate the human race, He pitied and loved human beings. It is indeed true that 'the greater a soul is, the more objects of compassion it hath.'

Thus with regard to the traditional Christian anthropology, we should say of it that it is no longer tenable. Whatever truth and reality attaches to it proceeds from the fact that a sense of moral failure and weakness is an essential part of normal Christian religious experience. And the lack of any such experience would seem to indicate a lack of moral and spiritual ambition, since it is only those who aim high that find serious difficulty in reaching their mark.

It should be noted in this connection that there exists in the New Testament the outline of an anthropology of a very different kind to the Augustinian. The most notable expression of it may be found in the eighth chapter of *Romans*. Creation is here seen groaning and travailling to produce a new humanity who will be sons of God. Christ for St. Paul is the type of the new Adam, the new humanity; He is the first-born of many brethren, the first embodiment of an altogether new quality of

life. The same idea is to be found in I *John* iii, 'Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be.' This anthropology looks not to the past but to the future; it lends itself to the idea of a creative process not yet complete, but one day to be completed, since 'If God be for us who can be against us?' This view of humanity may claim to be more consistent with the genius of Christianity and with what we know about the origin of our species than can the unscientific, unhistorical, and Manichean doctrine of Original Sin; which is only kept alive by the requirements of a sacerdotal system.

(3) We may now pass on to the third condition to be satisfied by a religion claiming finality: that it should take a view of reality which gives to human existence an adequate value and purpose.

It is not uninteresting to note in this connection that Christianity originally came as 'a protest and a revulsion' against a prevailing attitude of extreme pessimism. 'Men had lost interest in the world and Christianity brought them something to live for, it brought a *cause*.' It is true that the anthropology of early Christianity was pessimistic; it is true also that most primitive Christians looked for an imminent end of the world, and had none of our belief in progress or civilization. The prince of this world was the devil. Yet there was a background to this apparent despair and pessimism. 'Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God' sums up their attitude, which was *expectant*, and 'all human life that has any value is lived in expectation.' But though the believers in this heroic age of Christianity regarded themselves as strangers and pilgrims in an alien world which would soon pass away, they devoted themselves whole-heartedly to the present redemption of that world. The words of Jesus rang in their ears, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.' As Professor Kirsopp Lake has said, the Christian Church set itself to salvage the human waste products of a civilization which knew no pity. While the world went on its way, the new brotherhood set itself to seek and to save that which was lost, since every human being, made in the divine image, was of infinite value and had been purchased by the blood of Christ.

It is this infinite value of the individual human being, not only for himself or his brethren, but for the cosmos, that is the central doctrine of Christianity, which stands or falls with it. And as we know, it is gravely challenged to-day. If the doctrine goes, Christianity, in an attenuated form, may linger on a while longer, but is doomed eventually. Thus, when discussing the finality of our religion, we cannot evade this issue. We cannot hope to deal with it exhaustively here; yet a few considerations may be offered.

(a) The creative process, so far as we understand it at all, seems to have proceeded by stages of increasing individuality. If the order was the following: electron, atom, molecule, protoplasm, amoeba, going up through creatures of increasing complexity (and therefore of increasing individuality) up to man, it would seem as if individuality were the thing aimed at. In other words, the cosmos does attach importance to individuality; or rather, to speak in concrete terms, to the individual.

(b) The next point is that existence is grasped and known by individual minds. The dignity of the individual lies in his thought. As Pascal said, were the whole universe to unite to crush an individual, that individual would yet be greater than that which crushes him, for he knows that he dies, whereas of this the universe knows nothing. If the universe is unconscious, man is greater as having consciousness; if the universe is conscious, man still derives greatness from his ability to share the consciousness of the universe. One is reminded of Whitman's great line: 'I say to any man or woman, let your soul stand cool and composed before a million universes.' A prophetic utterance, since it appears that ours may be one of many.

(c) Not only are individual minds centres of knowledge, they are also centres of value. Man not only knows, but judges the universe; and as his knowledge is wider than that of any other being of which we have experience, so we may assume that his value-judgments have an equivalent degree of finality about them. Man may not be omniscient or infallible; but compared with other creatures he is so. 'Go to the ant; consider his ways and be wise,' says Solomon: but in reality the ant has very little to teach us, for although what the ant knows it knows very well, it has no capacity for increasing its know-

ledge; it cannot learn. The power to learn has been developed in man far more than in any other creature; this puts him on an altogether higher level.

(d) If personality be the highest product of the creative process, it is difficult to believe that this process does not itself include personality. Wherever we ourselves have experience of creation, it is the product of personality. A picture does not get itself painted, a poem written; nor, unfortunately, does a Conference paper compose itself. But if the creative power behind the universe is personal, that power may be presumed to attach special importance to the personalities which it has been the object of the creative process to produce. 'Thou hast made us for Thyself.'

(e) Another point worthy of attention is that recent tendencies in science seem to find a place for individuality in the sphere where it was once thought to be most noticeably absent, the sphere of physics. Speaking of the significance of the quantum laws, Professor Eddington has said:

'In this reconstruction all the determinism is removed from the laws of physics; the apparent determinism is found to be merely high probability. The probability is high (amounting practically to certainty) when averages of large numbers are considered, but in individual processes only moderate odds are concerned. The new quantum mechanics contains only laws which decide the odds; it apparently has no cognisance of any factors deciding what actually will happen. In the old conflict between freewill and predestination, it has hitherto seemed that physics comes down heavily on the side of predestination. The quantum theory has entirely removed this bias. Whatever view we may take of freewill on philosophical grounds, we cannot appeal to physics against it.'¹

The foregoing would seem to indicate that the Christian standpoint, which attaches unique value both to the human race and also to individual human beings, is not inconsistent with what we know of reality. For Christianity, the world of personality, of spiritual value, is the real world. Compared with this concrete world, the material world is an abstraction, and, if taken to be ultimately real, an illusion. This view is neither in itself irrational, nor yet untenable from a philosophic, and even from a scientific, point of view.

¹ *Nature*, Feb. 26, 1927, p. 328. Quoted by Wildon Carr, *The Unique Status of Man*, p. 179.

Thus from the respective aspects of religious experience, of human nature, and of existence generally, the Christian religion has something to offer of supreme and permanent value which makes it reasonable to speak of its finality.

Yet besides these points which have been dealt with, there is another consideration of importance, the attitude of the Christian religion towards suffering. For Christianity there can hardly be a problem of suffering, since, on the Christian theory, we do not exist in order to be happy: consequently, to be denied happiness is no injustice. The Christian theory of suffering has its roots in the Old Testament, in the *Book of Job* and in the *Servant Songs of Isaiah*. Job seems to teach that the problem has no solution which we can grasp; we can only trust in the ultimate wisdom and justice of things, and endure without bitterness. The Servant songs teach that suffering is redemptive. 'With his stripes we are healed.' In the New Testament, Jesus was 'a man of sorrows,' one who 'humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' He did not lead men to expect happiness, but the contrary: 'Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?' It was the weary and heavy laden that He invited to come to Him, and He offered them not happiness, but peace. St. Augustine divined the significance of these words, and said there was nothing like them in pagan literature. Indeed, paganism, ancient or modern, has no answer to the tragedy of human life.

The contrast has been well put by a modern writer :

'Hellenism,' he says (and for Hellenism we may put paganism) 'dispenses with the need for a deity, a future life, a purely spiritual world. . . . For the Greek (*i.e.* the pagan) the whole creation is not groaning and travailing in pain. He waits for no glory to be revealed, with which the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared. The glory is already present; flesh and blood can and do inherit the kingdom of God. . . . But for the Christian, abolish the unseen world, and the whole meaning and value of life is altered. If there is anything permanent in Christianity it is the certain persuasion that the world is not an adequate theatre for man, nor he capable of reaching the perfection of his nature unaided. This conviction underlies the doctrines of the Fall, of Predestination, of Grace; it prompts that sense of homelessness here to which Christian writers give constant expression. *Omnia quae hic amantur et transeunt* are the words of Augustine; *Ex umbris et imaginibus in*

veritatem is the epitaph of Newman; *Memoria hospitum unius diei praetereuntis* is Pascal's summary of our life.²

A belief in the finality of Christianity involves the conviction that the pagan view, however attractive and (apparently) reasonable, is shallow and, as it were, childish. Not that the pagan view is ever likely to disappear. At present it is, perhaps, stronger than ever. Our modern naturalism is scientific, and better based than the naturalism of the Greeks. Their gods, though beautiful, were powerless compared with our modern men of science. The thunderbolt of Zeus was a child's weapon compared with a modern bombing aeroplane; Mercury was a sluggard compared with a winner of the Schneider Cup. We can do all things through science which strengtheneth us.

But the pagan view, optimistic and attractive as it is, involves those who hold it in disillusionment; and no despair can equal that of the disillusioned hedonist. *Ecclesiastes* has expressed that disillusion with finality. When one comes to reflect upon it, it becomes evident that the facts of life are against the optimistic, pagan view. For example, is it not true that happiness lies in the past or the future, whilst the present never satisfies? Is it not true that we feel pain, not painlessness; care, not its absence; fear, but not security? Schopenhauer says that we are never conscious of the three greatest blessings of life—health, youth, and freedom. Moreover, as pleasures increase, the taste for them vanishes, since what is customary is no longer felt. Our existence is most happy when we perceive it least. Simple people do not look on heaven, as does the youthful member of the Student Christian Movement, as 'a call to higher service'; they look on the dead man as at rest. 'After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well.' The happiest moment of the happy man is the moment of his falling asleep, as the most miserable moment of the miserable man is that of his awakening. T. E. Lawrence, who might be supposed to have tasted life in all its vividness and variety, pronounces sleep to be the greatest happiness, a view which Plato puts into the mouth of Socrates. This seems to suggest that our life is happiest when we perceive it least. But if any desire to appreciate the *malaise*,

² R. W. Livingstone, *The Greek Genius and its Meaning for Us* (1912), p. 123.

discontent, and *ennui* of the contemporary pagan, let them peruse the modern progressive novel. Though infinitely tedious, such works well repay study. The *Sorrows of Werther* were nothing to the griefs and agitations of the modern married heroine, to whom vice is as vapid as virtue, who makes the worst of both worlds, and who can only say of her sins, 'I find no pleasure in them.'

Paganism, however reasonable it appears, must always remain a superficial philosophy, since it is based on the view that human life upon this planet is permanently satisfying; whereas it is not, save fitfully, accidentally, and with the gravest limitations. Even the pagan, who believes in happiness, believes also in *nemesis*; you cannot trust nature, who attracts you with her lures only to disillusion you in the end. It was a pagan who advised us to call no man happy until he is dead. Paganism, though it claims to be realistic, does not, save in the person of a sombre genius like Thomas Hardy, face reality. When it does, it becomes pessimist, since, so far as human life upon this planet is concerned, pessimism is the verdict of experience; hence writers of the deepest powers of observation and sympathy—Shakespeare, Tolstoy, Hardy—were all pessimists. Indeed, the writings of these men of supreme genius were profoundly Christian, since they saw the mystery and tragedy of life. That is the criterion. Whoever regards human life as a mystery, as something which does not carry its explanation, or even its justification, upon its surface, but which displays an essentially tragic quality (*i.e.* involves a combination of pain and worth), has grasped the meaning of Christianity, and is, so far, a Christian. This is why Virgil is a Christian poet, not because he foretold the Incarnation, but because he wrote :

Sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt.

For Christianity is not so much an answer to the problems presented by human life as a perception of the depth and mystery of those problems. What Christianity seems to teach is that life possesses a significance which passes our comprehension, since, in a sense, human life is not human at all; it transcends not only our knowledge, but *us*; it has links with realms of another quality of being. Compared with such a view as this, the pagan

view, whether ancient or contemporary, that life is meant for enjoyment, is shallow and even vulgar.

It is not to be expected that an apologetic of the kind outlined above will satisfy those for whom Christianity is primarily a dogma, a cultus, or an institution. The view taken throughout has been that Christianity is none of these, but is primarily an attitude to life, one which it is much more easy to recognize than to define. Only so far as dogma enables us to preserve this attitude in the face of much which seems to contradict it, is dogma of any value. Only so far as cultus enables us to realize the background which gives to life its worth, is cultus of any value. Only so far as institutions preserve a tradition and an atmosphere fostering the Christian attitude, are institutions of any value.

Belief in the finality of Christianity does not involve the view that it will ever be universally accepted, since 'many are called, but few are chosen'; and 'strait is the way and narrow is the gate which leadeth unto life.' In all probability, there will always exist the two contrary attitudes, the Christian and the pagan. But the Christian view, since it not only faces the facts of life (which paganism may do also) but supplies a background to the tragedy, gives them another meaning, and snatches victory out of defeat.

HISTORY AND MODERNISM: ENCOURAGEMENTS AND WARNINGS

I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

—*St. John x, 10*

DURING the past week we have been taking part in a Modernist Churchmen's Conference. There are many, but not among those who took part in that Conference, who will regard it as sheer waste of time. There are others to whom it will seem a daring and disastrous proceeding.

Those who regard our Conference as a sheer waste of time, a futile and fatuous affair, do not believe in religion. They look on religion as a dead or dying thing. They are convinced that it has had its day. They look into the future of humanity on this planet—and indeed humanity has no other history—and they see, with a certain French writer, 'NON-RELIGION' written right across it. Religion, they are sure, belongs to humanity's childhood: and, like the mists of dawn, it will be dissipated by the rising sun of modern science and historical criticism. Men of intelligence need trouble no further about it. Science, art, literature, music, industry, politics, sport are worthy of their devotion, but not religion—that curious mixture of old-world superstition and sentimentality, of magic and masquerade, is about to disappear.

Now I hold that people who think that religion can rightly be neglected—and neglected in the name of science and historical criticism—are making a profound mistake. In support of this statement, I would direct attention to the following facts—facts which are both historical and religious.

I.

Our scientific students of religion as they survey its long and varied history—extending far back into prehistoric times—can find, neither in the past nor present, tribes or communities or nations without religion. Religion is universal in human history. The statements of some of our earlier anthropologists that certain tribes were atheists, simply indicated that their religion was secretive or magical, or of a type so unfamiliar to the student as to be unrecognized by him. The verdict of Auguste Sabatier is the verdict of science: 'Mankind is incurably religious.' Man is not simply a cooking animal, a tool-using animal, a political animal (as Aristotle defines him), but he is also a worshipping animal. A man can no more help being fundamentally religious than he can help being fundamentally rational, moral, and aesthetic.

This being so, the choice for mankind is not, Will you have a religion, or will you have no religion? but What kind of religion will you have? One which is magical, superstitious, and obscurantist, or one which is dominantly moral, rational, and spiritual? You can make your choice; you are surrounded by all sorts of religions, old and new, primitive and progressive, uplifting and debasing. But you cannot make a right choice

* Sermon preached before the Fifteenth Modern Churchmen's Conference in St. Botolph's Church, Cambridge, on Sunday, September 23rd, 1928, by the Reverend H. D. A. Major, D.D., F.S.A.

without taking a good deal of trouble. You cannot do it rightly without thinking about it both from your own point of view and that of others, nor without rigorously testing your choice.

II.

The second fact to which I would direct attention is that religion, as we might suppose from its being universal in human history, plays a very important part in human affairs.

‘Captains and conquerors leave a little dust,
And kings a dubious legend of their reign :
The swords of Caesars, they are less than rust :
The poet doth remain.’

But the founders of the great religions leave to after-ages a more majestic and enduring heritage even than the poets. Religious founders are among the greatest men of the past. Its priests and leaders are prominent in all social and political life. They mould societies ; lead movements ; create organizations ; foment antagonisms. We who meet in an ancient university town need no reminder of the part that religion has played in education, nor can we fail to ask ourselves whether there can be any adequate system of education which omits religion. Tiele, a leader in the scientific study of religion, wrote of religion as ‘one of the mightiest motors in the history of mankind.’ Even in an age in which historians attach vast importance to the part played in human history by economic factors, they will not dissent from Tiele’s assertion. Herbert Spencer in his *Study of Sociology* tells us that ‘A religious system is a normal and essential factor in every evolving society.’ We should mark the word *evolving*. Religion is not characteristic of a decadent and dying society : in such a society its religion will also be at a low ebb : its rites will be neglected and its sanctions doubted. In such a case, if the community is to revive and survive, its religion must be revived, or the community must get a new religion. Of the many definitions of religion which have been coined, none is more suggestive than that which describes it as : ‘The inside of civilization.’ The truest, because the profoundest, description of any civilization can be expressed in terms of its religion. Its religion determines a civilization’s real character. Although religion is not the same as ethics, and arises out of quite a different set of conditions, yet in all the higher religions, religion and ethics are closely united, and a decay of religion in any community will be accompanied and certainly followed by a moral decay—a debasement of conduct and character. If there be aught wrong with our civilization, and doubtless there is much wrong with it, it is most important to look to our religion. Economic, hygienic, social, educational, political problems are serious enough, but our religious problems underlie them all and interpenetrate them all, for our religion really determines the quality of our civilization.

III.

The third fact to which I would direct attention is that the Religion of Christ—which is something very different from many existing forms of Christianity—constitutes the highest point of religious evolution. I do not wish to seem to make odious comparisons. I recognise with gratitude the great spiritual and moral truths taught in other great religions. I honour their founders, saints and sages, but if you are a modern civilised man, there is of all the historic religions only one that can be yours—if you feel as you are bound to feel, if you reflect about it, the need for a

religion—that is the religion of Christ. Of course, you may not feel the need of it for yourself, but the need of it for others, for the education of your children, for the strengthening of the forces working for social progress, for the development of a noble civilisation and an undying art. Now there are two very simple tests of a religion. I do not mean its expansion or the number of its adherents—although Christianity stands that test better than does any other religion—but its conception of God and the moral ideals which it enshrines and propagates. The test of the conception of God was that selected by that wonderful thirteenth century missionary, Ramon Lull, who sought in the days of the Crusades to convert Islam, not by the sword, but by argument: that must be the truest religion which teaches the highest conception of God. Now when we examine the attributes of Allah, we see that omnipotence, wisdom, righteousness and mercifulness are his, but the Father of Jesus Christ is revealed not only as these, but also as love, redeeming, self-sacrificing love. This is a higher ideal of the Divine Nature, therefore the Religion of Christ should be accepted rather than Islam. As for the Christian moral ideal, it also is based on love, not love merely as an emotion, but as active service. Virtue is for the Christian various forms of love—love in action: vice is for the Christian various forms of selfishness. Let it be granted, alas, that our Christianity and our so-called Christian civilisation are very far indeed from exhibiting the Christian ethic in operation: that in some respects our Christianity has been and is a horrible travesty of the Religion of Christ. Nevertheless, things must be judged by what they are becoming, the direction in which they are moving. Judged in this way, current Christianity fills us with hope. The Christian ethic is capable of infinite expansion and application. Charges against its impossible or unpractical character only mean that there are enormous difficulties in living up to it in our present semi-Christian or un-Christian societies, not that it is really absolutely impossible to do so, or that it will not become increasingly possible to do so, or that it would not be highly desirable that all of us should: indeed, that by doing so, we should create a society possessed of perfectly wonderful values, and those not simply ethical, but also social, aesthetic, and even scientific. Thomas Carlyle confessed that the Christian character was the best. Wherever we come across ‘a real Christian,’ although a very rare bird, we recognize this.

This, then, is our reply to those who think it fatuous and futile to be deeply interested in religion and in the Christian form of it. To such objectors we say: If you but knew it; if you would but try it, it would give you, as you did so, the highest values in life: it would give you and your civilization that life which is life indeed: it would demonstrate to you by your own experience the truth of the words ascribed to Jesus in my text: ‘I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.’

IV.

Now I would address myself to those who think that to organize and take part in a Modernist Conference is a daring and disastrous proceeding.

The Christian religion with its wonderful unveiling of the Divine Nature in Christ, with its wonderful moral ideal, with its extraordinary vitality, and its no less extraordinary power of adaptation to the changing forms of human needs in a changing environment, ought in far less than two thousand years to have gathered all mankind into a great and noble moral and spiritual fellowship, but it has not done so. The choicest treasure mortal times afford is ignored by many, despised by some, and even de-

tested by others. Why is this? Is it because of the wickedness of mankind: that they love darkness better than light, strife more than peace, the base better than the things which are just, pure, lovely and of good report? This is not really the case. Mankind has its votaries and slaves of the world, the flesh, and the devil, but it is not the evil in the ordinary man and woman which accounts for their attitude towards present-day Christianity. One of the most potent causes of the present situation is that current Christianity does in various ways very seriously *misrepresent* the religion of Christ. If it were only the baseness and degradation of human nature which were keeping back men and women from Christianity, then we should see all people of goodwill, of strong character, of high intelligence, zealous adherents of Christianity. Too often this is not the case. Many of these people are outside the Churches. That is the really alarming feature in the present situation, and it is not peculiar to England and the British Dominions. It is seen, with rare exceptions, throughout the whole Christian world. The Christianity which the Churches represent is sectarian and exclusive: it is combined with superstitions and with certain notable perversions of the teaching of Jesus: it is united to false history and discredited science, and worse still to degrading views of God, and that too by the utterances of some of its most authoritative teachers—notably by the doctrinal decrees of, what Lord Macaulay has called, 'that august and fascinating superstition,' the Church of Rome. It is these things which account for the present parlous state of the religion of Christ in Christendom. As a consequence we see Christendom assuming the form of diminishing groups of sectarian character in our great modern communities which are becoming rapidly secularized. Those who love our nation: those who look for the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ, must deplore the present state of affairs. Some see a similarity in the present situation to that of Christianity in the early ages. There is none. The little groups of Christians in the Roman Empire were the advance guards of a conquering host; the diminishing and separated groups of Christians in our modern civilization are the broken fragments of a defeated army. It is this which leads people to talk about Christianity being at the cross-roads.

V.

There is, however, no need to despair, but there is very great need for clear thought and courageous, even self-sacrificing action. It is here that the study of history is full of encouragement. I remember when one said to Dean Rashdall: 'Christianity is to-day at the cross-roads'; he replied, 'Yes, it is, but we do well to remember that it has been there often before.' It was that great scholar Bishop Lightfoot who spoke of Church history as 'a cordial for drooping spirits.' There is nothing in the nature of the Christian Church, indeed just the contrary, to stand in the way of a great reformation which should vastly increase its serviceableness for humanity. The Church has only to let the Spirit of Jesus, and His principles and ideals, purge and inspire it. His commandments are not grievous. His yoke is easy and His burden is light: He offers love, and light, and life to each and all: He offers truth and freedom. But when He gives, He demands also. He demands loyalty, unflinching loyalty to the principles which He taught: He demands that they shall be supreme. This means that much in our current Christianity must be jettisoned—much that is false, and rigid, and exclusive, and enslaving—the accumulated *impedimenta* of the ages. It is this that the Modernist is engaged in attempting to accomplish.

It might be supposed that in the light of our modern knowledge; our modern zeal for reforms; our modern belief in progress, that no task could be easier to accomplish than that of the Modernist. It is not so. Opposition, prejudice, misrepresentation, apprehension, meet him on all sides. Modernism, it is said, is unChristian; Modernism is destructive; Modernism is negative; Modernism is heretical and sceptical; Modernism is hard, cold, ruthless intellectualism profaning religion's deepest mysteries; Modernism is the spirit that denies and will end by destroying Christianity.

These things are said very often in good faith and by good people. The charges against Modernism are not entirely without justification. Modernists are not always as wise, as considerate, as patient, as loving as they ought to be, but even if they were, they would still have to face bitter opposition born at least partly of intense traditionalism which refuses to learn new truth. This fanatical traditionalism is not so very different from the spirit of Pharisaism which opposed Christ's Gospel of the Kingdom. But difficult as is the task, and powerful as is the opposition, the Modernist must go forward with his undertaking. It is not his. God, he feels, has called him to it. The Spirit of Love and Light and Life: the Spirit of Truth and Freedom and Fellowship: is urging him to it. Without that which Modernism offers, Christianity cannot be united, and that because the errors of the past, and the superstitions of the present, are mainly responsible for the continuance of these divisions and weaknesses. The modern man and woman may be willing to enter a Church which while confessing its fallibility is courageously and humbly striving to learn the truth and to do it: they certainly are not going to become adherents of a Church which claims infallibility and refuses to get rid of its errors and exclusiveness.

VI.

This work, to which the Modernist is called, demands among other things a readiness to learn those lessons which the history of the Church can teach us. While we strive to get rid of error, let us use and value the rich heritage which the past has bequeathed to us; let us not despise the strength which comes from continuity and succession. Neither let us think that we shall perform our task effectively by becoming individualists and sectarians. That was the weakness of the Robert Elsmere type. We are Churchmen and Catholics. We must perform our task as Churchmen and Catholics, as members of the historic Church of Christ, and as those who value the Church's historic institutions, but also as those who are resolved that these things shall be our servants, not our tyrants, wisely fitted and subordinated to our modern religious needs.

Is it then daring and disastrous to give ourselves to a study of some aspect of the truth which is the foundation of Modernism, and to confer as to how best to apply it practically? Is it misguided folly to give thought and energy and prayer, to make offerings of time and money, to this undertaking? There seems to me to be nothing to equal it in importance among the many things which God is calling us to do in this modern world—to make the Church of Christ the great centre of life, and light, and love, for mankind.

But let me return once more to my text. 'I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.' The sickness of an acquisitive society, the slavery of the sensual life, the ambitions and antagonisms of the worldling, need the purging, calming, inspiring power which the religion of Christ can give in increasing measure.

It was an immemorial custom among the Maoris of New Zealand, that when one of them lay on his death-bed, the *tohunga*, or priest, who attended him, cried to him three times when he was at his last gasp: 'Cling to life: cling to life: cling to life.'¹ We can only cling to life effectively, if we cling to God, to God as He is made known to us in Jesus Christ.

CONFERENCE PRAYERS.

I.

O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, the Prince of Peace; Give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions. Take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatsoever else may hinder us from godly Union and Concord: that, as there is but one Body, and one Spirit, and one Hope of our calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all, so we may henceforth be all of one heart, and one soul, united in one holy bond of Truth and Peace, of Faith and Charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify Thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

II.

Gracious Father, we humbly beseech Thee for Thy holy catholic Church. Fill it with all truth; in all truth with all peace. Where it is corrupt, purge it; where it is in error, direct it; where it is superstitious, rectify it; where anything is amiss, reform it; where it is right, strengthen and confirm it; where it is in want, furnish it; where it is divided and rent asunder, unite it, in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

III.

O Lord, our Saviour, Who hast warned us that Thou wilt require much of those to whom much is given; grant that we whose lot is cast in so goodly a heritage may strive together the more abundantly to extend to others what we so richly enjoy; and, as we have entered into the labours of other men, so to labour that in their turn other men may enter into ours, to the fulfilment of Thy holy will and our own salvation. *Amen.*

IV.

Keep our hearts, O Lord, in that realm of the Spirit where the mind is without fear; where knowledge is deep; where words come from the heart; where tireless striving wins towards perfection; where the clear stream of reason loses not its way but flows on in deeper thought and ever-widening action, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*

V.

O Thou Who art the light of the minds that know Thee, the life of the souls that love Thee, and the strength of the hearts that serve Thee; help us so to know Thee that we may truly love Thee; so to love Thee that we may fully serve Thee, Whom to serve is perfect freedom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

VI.

We beseech Thee, O Lord, to set our feet in a large place, where hearts are made pure by faith in Thee; where faces are turned towards the light: where all are one in Thee and no narrow walls of partition separate us from one another and destroy that unity which is the gift of Thy Spirit. *Amen.*

¹ *Kia kotahi ki te ao!*
Kia kotahi ki te ao!
Kia kotahi ki te po!